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ABSTRACT

This report reviews the status of early childhood education (ECE) programs in UNICEF's Middle East and North Africa region. The report compiles information about ECE programs in 18 countries based on a questionnaire sent to UNICEF country offices and other sources. The introduction sets out the economic and social rationales for investing in early childhood education. Chapter 1 reviews the existing regional literature on early childhood education. Chapter 2, the bulk of the report, presents profiles of early childhood education in 18 Middle Eastern and North African countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The profiles typically provide, for each country, basic data on ECE programs and information on the background of ECE, costs, curricula, the current status of ECE, and constraints on ECE. Chapter 3 summarizes the main findings of the survey, including historical background and data on institutions, staff, curricula, buildings, and program quality; and reports cost estimates of existing ECE interventions. Chapter 4 identifies 12 issues needing priority attention and recommends actions to address the most crucial issues identified in the report. Chapter 5 identifies 16 input, process, and output indicators that could be used by educational planners and policymakers for monitoring and evaluating ECE services regionally. English- and Arabic-language versions of the questionnaire are appended. Contains 52 references. (TM)

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RESEARCHED BY
Dr. Mohammad Salih Khattab

PREPARED FOR THE EDUCATION SECTION OF
UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
Amman, Jordan
1995

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Preface

With increasing attention being paid to the promotion of ECD (early childhood development) as a method of enhancing performance at the primary level in UNICEF's MENA strategy, it is imperative that a thorough assessment of the status and conditions of ECD policies and interventions and services in the 21 countries which make up the MENA region be carried out. As no accurate comparative information exists about the status of ECD in the MENA region and no information was available at UNICEF MENARO, UNICEF COs or at the national government level, I requested the consultant to limit the comprehensive review to early childhood education (ECE), which is an often forgotten component in the range of ECD services.

This review attempts to demonstrate the significance of ECE and presents, in Chapter 1, a review of the existing regional literature on ECE. The bulk of the study is concentrated in Chapter 2 which comprises the ECE profiles of 18 MENA countries. Chapter 3 presents the main findings and current programme financing. The unit cost estimates of existing interventions were limited to two countries which provided relevant data. Chapter 4 identifies the issues needing priority attention and recommends actions to address most of these crucial issues raised in the analysis. Chapter 5 identifies a set of indicators which could be used by educational planners and policy makers for monitoring and evaluating ECE services regionally. A detailed bibliography and a questionnaire are attached.

This review is intended to assist education planners and policy makers in the MENA region to identify a range of suitable options for implementation, in their specific national settings, to focus attention and resources on increasing the number of early childhood programmes, institutions, child enrollments and to improve the quality of services being provided.

UNICEF, in MENA, places the enhancement of ECE high on the list of priorities. UNICEF looks forward to playing a key role, as a partner with other international, regional, national and NGOs in insuring that ECE services are provided for at least 50% of our regional target population (children from 0 to 6 years) before the year 2000.

Frank Dall

Regional Education Adviser, MENARO

Amman, Jordan
September 1994

Acknowledgements

This comprehensive review on the status of Early Childhood Education in the MENA region was developed in coordination and collaboration with UNICEF Regional Office in Amman and 18 UNICEF country offices in the MENA region.

Dr. Frank Dall, regional education advisor, shaped the task proposal and terms of reference of this study. He provided the consultant with professional advice, support and logistic services to carry out this study. I gratefully acknowledge his guidance and input as the consultant developed the study design, prepared the questionnaire, collected and analyzed the data from UNICEF country offices and prepared the report. I also acknowledge the input of two ECD experts in the Consultative Group on ECCD of UNICEF NYHQ, Dr. Cassie Landers and Dr. Robert Myers. This report would not have seen the light without their valuable input and support.

I would also like to acknowledge Ms. Najwa Kefaya, Assistant Project Officer (Education), MENARO, who provided support for this effort through the follow-up she made in all UNICEF country offices to collect their feedback on the questionnaire. I also acknowledge all UNICEF programme officers (Education) in the country offices who responded to the items of the questionnaire and provided the consultant with valuable reports and research studies relevant to the study. I acknowledge the efforts of Ms. Lori Issa, who produced the final draft of the document.

I extend my deepest thanks to all who contributed.

Mohammad Khattab
UNICEF ECD
Consultant
September 1994

Glossary

Acronyms

ALECSO	Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Indicators
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency

Definition of Terms

ALECSO: Is the 'UNESCO' of the Arab League states. Its headquarters is located in Tunis.

ECD: Refers to programmes intended to provide child care and social, intellectual and physical development for infants and young children under six years of age.

ECE: Early childhood education focusses more directly on preschool and early education programmes. It deals with evidence regarding the potential effects of early interventions on progress of performance in primary schools.

GNP: Measures the total economic domestic and foreign value claimed by residents and is calculated on an annual basis without making deductions for depreciation.

HDI: Human Development Index is a composite index of three variables: life expectancy, education and income. All three components carry equal weight. The HDI ranks 173 countries and areas (industrial and developing).

ISESCO: Is the "UNESCO" of Islamic countries; it promotes education, science and culture in the countries of the Islamic World.

MENA: The 21 countries that make up the region "Middle East and North Africa". MENA comprises Iran, Turkey and 19 Arab states.

UNESCO: The United Nations organization, comprising almost all world states; it promotes education, science and culture worldwide.

UNICEF: The United Nations organization in charge of promoting childrens' well-being all over the world.

UNRWA: The United Nations agency in charge of relief, health, education and social services for Palestinian refugees in the Near East.

Executive Summary

The introduction of the study covered the following aspects : (i) Why ECE in MENA?, (ii) Purpose of the review, (iii) Methodology and data sources, (iv) Limitations and (v) Organization of the review.

The study included a review of the existing ECE literature for MENA . Chapter 2 constituted the major part of the study. It covered profiles of ECE in 18 MENA countries. These countries were : Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, UAE and Yemen. The country-by-country profiles cover historical background, current data on ECE and constraints to ECE in each country. Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia were not included in the study because no data were provided for these.

Also included were the major findings on ECE and cost estimates in MENA. These included the following : information on ECE institutions, teachers, children, academic qualifications of staff, training of ECE personnel, curricula and programmes, buildings and equipment, supervision and quality of service. Also included were Koranic schools, government policy and the major constraints to ECE in MENA. Cost estimates were put in perspective. Funding covered tuition fees in private schools for 9 MENA countries. Parents, in some countries, pay tuition fees up to $ 2000 per child per annum.

Twelve issues needing priority attention in ECE, together with their relevant recommendation, are identified. These issues deal with the need to have **national pre-school policies** in many countries in the region, to make preschool education institutions **part of the national education systems,** to introduce programmes in **human resource development**, to empower ECE staff with professional skills and to involve **parent** and community leaders **as partners** in the provision of preschool services.

Other issues emphasize the need to promote **joint funding** at the local, national and international levels, to use the **limited human and financial** resources efficiently and **cost-effectively** and to maximize the opportunities in preschool education for the maximum number of children in the region. To enable preschool institutions to respond to children's needs, they have to be **motivating** and **attractive places**. **Koranic schools**, in particular, need to be strengthened to enable them reach **children at risk** in rural and remote areas. To encounter the adverse effects of large group sizes of children as a result to the high adult/child ratio in the region, and to provide quality services, more **ECE staff** need to be **recruited** and **trained** and **preschool curricula** need to be developed benefitting from the **active learning** methodology in ECE.

16 indicators for educational planners and policy makers in order to monitor and evaluate ECE services in the region were discussed. **Input indicators** include : the percentage of children benefitting from the services from those who are under 6 years, the enrolment rates by gender, locational equity according to geographical distribution, adult/child ratio, availability of a national policy on ECE, public expenditure on preschool education, characteristics of staff, availability of buildings and equipment and involvement of parents and the local community in developing ECE programmes.

Process indicators include : setting up room arrangement conducive to learning environment, monitoring active learning strategies, organizing appropriate larning experiences and establishing basic parts and guidelines for ECE daily routine.

Output indicators include : decreasing dropout and repetition rates in primary schools, increasing cognitive skills during early school years and increasing productivity and cost savings as a result of ECE.

A call for action is made to local, national and international organizations to proceed with all due haste towards advocating more ECE intervention programmes quantitatively and qualitatively.

INTRODUCTION

WHY ECE IN MENA?

In setting out a rationale for investing in ECE programmes in MENA region, it is important to respond to skeptics' concerns. "It is a mother's job" is a wide-spread view in MENA, a belief that a mother's place is at home bringing up children. The ECE programmes, particularly if they are outside the home, are sometimes seen as eroding the traditional role of the mother. Skeptics must be convinced of the financial feasibility of ECE programmes for the development of a child's personality, for "As the twig is bent, so grows the tree".

The compelling social and economic arguments for the significance of investing in organized ECE activities require recognition by national governments and private non-governmental organizations. They include:

- *The Human Rights Argument:* Children have a right to develop to their full potential. For many people, the obligation to protect a child's right is the most fundamental and convincing reason to invest in programmes to enhance early childhood development.

- *The Moral and Social Values Argument:* The transmission of moral and social values that will guide the future of children begins with preschool age children.

- *The Social Equity Argument:* Stressful conditions that inhibit development in the early years affect the poor more than the rich, reinforcing social inequities.

- *The Economic Argument:* Society benefits through increased productivity and cost savings associated with enhanced early child development.[1]

During the last three decades, governments and NGOs have been working to improve the educational situation and provide education for all in developing countries throughout the world. UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, UNDP and 156 nations committed themselves to basic education at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Thailand in 1990.

In adopting basic education as its top priority until the year 2000, UNICEF established the following goal, among others, for the 1990s: ***"Expansion of early childhood development activities, including appropriate low cost family - and community - based interventions"***. Of UNICEF's 21 countries in the MENA region, 18 countries, whose population is more than three hundred million people, reported that they actually provide services, through various preschool institutions, to about two million children under 6. This means at least 60 million children. The coverage of ECE services in the MENA region is among the lowest in the world. Moreover, available data suggests that children most in need of these services are those in the rural areas; therefore, enhancing ECE programmes is vital to the achievement of UNICEF's above-mentioned goal.

PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

The purpose of this review is specified in the "Terms of Reference" of the study as follows:

- Carrying out a comprehensive review of the existing regional literature on ECD and summarizing the main issues raised by studies, reports, etc.

- Designing a short but focussed questionnaire which will be screened by the task manager before sending it out to UNICEF's 21 MENA countries for completion. The questionnaire attempts to survey the status, at country level, of ECD private and public interventions and assess the effectiveness of existing services in reaching children nationally. Specific information is gleaned on any existing community and home-based services being offered voluntarily or for by non-profit organizations, NGOs and other voluntary groups.

- Estimating the cost per unit of existing ECD interventions at each country level and from this attempt estimating the current national levels of expenditure required to provide this level of education to all at-risk children.

- Identifying the critical issues needing priority attention and recommending actions to address most, or all, of the critical issues raised.

- Identifying a set of easy to use indicators which may be used by educational planners and policy makers for the monitoring and evaluation of ECD services regionally.

METHODOLOGY & DATA SOURCES

This comprehensive review is the outcome of the responses received from 18 UNICEF's MENA country offices from many national MENA authorities to the questionnaire in Arabic, and of the documents and reports they delivered. Another major source of information on ECD and ECE programmes is the UNICEF annual reports and, for many of the countries, the situation analysis covering conditions of children. Nevertheless, neither questionnaire responses nor UNICEF reports included the kind of information that would allow one to describe the larger programme picture for MENA countries in a systematic way.

Other sources were consulted to try to fill the gaps, mainly R. Myers & C. Landers of the Consultative Group on ECCD who provided valuable information. Computer search was carried out regarding all available research studies pertaining to ECD & ECE in MENA region.

The terms of reference stipulated that the synthesized report of the comprehensive review be based on the data collected through a review of literature, a questionnaire, case studies, annual reports, situational analyses and research reports and studies. It was a challenge to synthesize such diverse information from such different sources. There was a lot of data, but it lacked standardization. Enough information was though available to prepare a country by country profile for most countries of MENA region. Based on the available data, the major section of the comprehensive review became a country by country profile of ECE services in MENA region, (i.e. Chapter II).

LIMITATIONS

Robert Myers stated in his famous book "*The Twelve Who Survive: Strengthening Programmes of Early Childhood Development in the Third World*" (1992) that "at present, a detailed and comprehensive description of child care and developments in the Third World is impossible...A great deal of child care is so informal that it is not included within any set of statistics."

Thorough review of all available literature on ECD and continuous follow-up on UNICEF's 21 country offices during a period of five months limited us to the more modest task of focussing on *early childhood education*, which is a main component of ECD, through a review of organized preschool programmes, kindergartens and community-based centres in MENA region. Even so, the task proved to be complex and difficult (but not impossible), for rarely does one find information about the different ECE programmes in one place. However, the task was carried out, the response rate to the questionnaire was 86%, and the outcome was a first ever document on "*A Comprehensive Review on the Status of ECE in MENA Region*", covering 18 countries.

The profile of ECE services in each country reflects the inconsistent and uneven amount of data about such services. That is why there is no consistency in the size or coverage of each country profile.

Moreover, the 'unit cost estimate of existing ECD intervention at each country level...' was not possible to accomplish as the required data was made available neither by the UNICEF country offices nor by national governments, with the exception of two countries, Syria and Tunisia. Costs and funding pertaining to ECE in the MENA region were tackled instead.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REVIEW

Chapter I presents the existing regional literature on ECD, and ECE. To enrich the regional overview, the input of the international organizations, which have relevant activities in the MENA region, was added to this chapter. Chapter II presents a country by country profile of ECE services in 18 countries. These profiles show how nations serve young children under 6. Chapter III presents findings on ECE and cost estimates in MENA. Chapter IV discusses critical ECE issues and presents some feasible recommendations. Chapter V identifies a set of indicators which may be used by educational planners and policy makers for the monitoring and evaluation of ECE services regionally. Chapter VI includes the bibliography on ECD, and ECE, together with the questionnaire in English and Arabic (Appendix A and B).

I A Review Of The Existing ECE Literature For MENA

Background

The existing regional literature on ECE is scarce and no current information or assessment is available on studies and reports related to preschool education in the MENA region. Therefore, this section attempts to present the international input on ECE which had direct impact on the region, especially in the 1990s. Input from international organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, the High/Scope Foundation, Save the Children and the Consultative Group on ECCD was highlighted.

This chapter also comprises a review of available regional literature on the UNICEF-supported, video-based parent education system, the State of the Child in the Arab World, Koranic schools, and reviews, reports and research studies on preschool education in three countries in the MENA region, namely Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Internationsl Input on ECE

I. International Organizations' Attention to ECE

International organizations have, in the 1990s, been paying more attention to young children than they have in the past. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (approved November 1989), the Summit for Children (September, 1990) and the World Conference on Education for All (March, 1990), all with their follow-up mechanisms, have helped place the young child on the international agenda and provide additional impetus to national initiatives.

UNICEF NYHQ and MENARO have, in the 1990s, supported ECE through the education sector and giving attention to care as an important dimension of conceptualizing its programmes. The World Bank has approved loans to many developing nations that either focus on ECD or contain preschool or integrated early childhood components. The organization **Childwatch** was formed in 1992. The first issue of **Childhood, A Global Journal of Child Research** appeared in 1993.

In **The State of the World's Children**, UNICEF continues to place almost exclusive emphasis on child health and nutrition issues. A vision of child development that includes mental, social and emotional dimensions is just beginning to penetrate the institutional thinking as expressed in the 1993 and 1994 reports.

In the Middle East, the European Union (brokered by Save the Children Foundation/UK) funded a community-based early education programme with Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Designs have been completed on a similar proposal for Jordan's Palestinian refugee communities in urban Amman and bedouin villages in the Bani Hamida area where SC already supports women's production activities.

The Consultative Group on ECCD, based at UNICEF's HQs, has received funds to coordinate a project whose main purpose is to develop , in the mid 1990s, and field test indicators intended to strengthen planning, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy for programming ECCD activities. The project will be carried out in four countries, including Jordan - with the Noor Al-Hussein Foundation working in conjunction with the National Centre for Educational Research and Development. (Coordinators' Notebook, 1994).

II. High/Scope Foundation

The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, established in 1974, is an international organization which promotes early childhood projects, curricula and training programmes and international institutes to train teachers in early childhood education. The services are provided worldwide including some countries in MENA region. In 1989, the High/Scope released a publication entitled: *How Nations Serve Young Children: Profiles of Child Care and Education in 14 Countries*, 409 pages. In 1994, High/Scope released another publication entitled: *Families Speak: Early Childhood Care and Education in 11 Countries*. A set of videotapes portraying typical early childhood settings in 15 nations has also been prepared. These references are very valuable resources for policy makers and ECE planners in the MENA region.

The High/Scope curriculum and training programme focus on the preparation of educators to implement the High/Scope educational approach. This curriculum is widely recognized as a successful approach to early childhood education focusing on active learning. The fundamental premise is that children are active learners who learn best from activities they plan and carry out themselves. (Coordinators' Notebook, 1994).

In the 1990s, educators from Finland, Portugal, *Turkey*, India, the United Kingdom, *Palestine, Iran,* Mexico, South Africa and Canada joined High/Scope training programmes to become certified as teacher-trainers and to acquire the basic skills required to implement the High/Scope approach with preschool children. Other MENA countries are benefitting from the literature developed by High/Scope to provide better ECE programmes.

III. International Handbook of Early Childhood Education

Gary A. Woodill (ed.) and others published this 950-page document in December 1992. The first of two introductory essays in this handbook presents a historical perspective on international childhood education; the second provides a cross-national analysis of themes in the late 20th century's child care and early education. The bulk of the document consists of essays that review early childhood, preschool and primary education in 45 countries, including seven countries from the MENA region, namely *Bahrain, Iran, Oman, Sudan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.* Topics discussed in these essays include curriculum, teacher education, parent involvement and education, historical background of education, special needs of children, day-care, school organization and educational theories and philosophy. Most of the essays contain a bibliography of approximately 300 works in English that present an overview of ECE in a particular country or compare ECE in two or more countries.

IV. Preparing Children for Schools

"Preparing Children for Schools and Schools for Children: Notes, Comments" is a 62-page document prepared by the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, UNICEF NY, in 1991. This paper critically examines evaluations of the effects of early childhood development programmes in third world countries, including the *Middle East*. The readiness of children for school is defined in terms of children's physical abilities and activity levels, cognitive ability, learning style, knowledge base and social and psychological competencies, while the readiness of schools for children is considered in terms of availability, accessibility, quality and adaptation to local needs and circumstances. This section concludes by examining the influence of these factors on school enrollment, progress and performance. The second section reviews studies of (1) nutrition intervention programmes in six developing countries, (2) ECE programmes in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and (3) the effects of early intervention programmes on enrollment, promotion, grade repetition, dropout rates and performance. In the final section, the implications of these findings are discussed and policy recommendations regarding programme integration, organization and evaluation are presented.

V. A World Survey on ECE

In 1974, UNESCO carried out a world survey of preschool education; answers were received from 67 countries and a report entitled World Survey of Preschool Education was published. In 1988, a follow-up survey was begun to determine the current situation with respect to preschool education. In the second survey, the scope of the inquest was expanded to include all ECE programmes (Fisher, 1991). Respondents were asked to include both formal and non-formal types of ECE programmes (not just formal preschools). But the response rate to the questionnaire was only 54 percent. The level of details of the answers varied enormously, as did the kinds of programmes included. Although the survey provides some interesting national descriptions, including data on ECE in 11 MENA countries, it is difficult to try to use the data to paint a general picture of ECE in the world in the 1980s.

The UNESCO World Survey does confirm the general, and sometimes dramatic, growth of ECE institutions and enrollments in the 1980-1988 period. It also confirms the still relatively low coverage in most third world countries and an urban bias in a significant number of places. In addition, the survey suggests that more than half of the programmes were fee charging programmes.

VI. Childhood Care and Education: Notes, Comments

Veda Prakasha prepared the above mentioned 146-page document as Digest No. 11 under the UNESCO series (Child, Family, Community) in 1983. This digest explores the possibilities of cost reduction in extending the coverage and upgrading the quality of preschool education, especially in developing countries. The digest also seeks to highlight the importance of community participation in developing and managing preschool institutions and programmes. Chapters cover the following topics: the overall scene; the care of pre-schooling; qualitative improvement with the possibility of cost reduction; measuring the quality of preschool education; improving management of early childhood care and education;

improving institutional and programme management by means of community participation; developmental research, with case studies from Malaysia and *Turkey*; the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation; main conclusions to develop more relevant and culturally sensitive forms of ECE. The final chapter briefly discusses various possible roles that international aid might play in the creation and development of viable, culturally sensitive preschool education programmes in developing countries.

Enhancing ECE in MENA Region:

I. A Video-Based Parent Education System

The overall goal of this UNICEF initiative is to design and develop a country-specific video-based parent education system. The programme intends to help parents and care givers ensure an optimal learning environment by providing essential knowledge, strategies and resources for enhancing child development through the first six years of life. For a three-year period (1993-1995), five 30 minute video programmes are under production. Each video, accompanied by a Facilitators' and Parents' guidebook, includes basic information on normal child development, and suggestions for creating an effective home learning environment.

The video-based parent education system will be developed and evaluated in seven countries in the MENA region including: *Jordan, West Bank, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon*. Following this development phase, the system will be distributed to the countries within the region and subsequently made available to other UNICEF regions. The goal for MENA region is that by the year 2000, 80 percent of parents will have access to and understand a defined level of knowledge regarding the essential care and development needs of the young child from birth to six years of age.

II. The State of the Child in the Arab World

The Arab Council for Childhood and Development, established in Cairo in 1986, aims at supporting child development in the fields of health, education, culture and social development. In this context, the council has embarked on publishing annual reports on 'The State of the Child in the Arab World' as of 1989. Until 1994, five annual reports were published comprising statistical data on the status of Arab children. The reports include data on children and detailed tables comprising indicators on health, nutrition, education and culture as well as demographic and economic aspects in each of the Arab countries.

These annual reports are published in English and Arabic and include some information on ECE services provided for preschool children in the Arab World.

III. Koranic Schools

UNESCO published the final report of a "*Regional Seminar of Experts on Koranic Schools, and their Role in the Universalization and Renewal of Basic Education*", which was held in 1993. The main themes of the seminar were: (i) General policy towards Koranic

Schools, (ii) Planning, (iii) Curriculum, (iv) Education and training of teachers, (v) Administration, (vi) Modernization and Development, and (vii) Proposals for cooperation.

Information about Koranic preschool education centres were presented in the participating countries, i.e. *Sudan*, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mali, Chad and Mauritania. The role of two organizations in promoting religious preschool education was emphasized. These two organizations are: The Arab League Educational, Cultural & Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). Recommendations were incorporated in the body of the final report regarding the themes of the seminar. Nine recommendations were addressed to UNICEF, UNESCO, ALECSO & ISESCO and other organizations to provide technical assistance and the means to finance its implementation.

The participants in the regional seminar of experts attempted to agree on Koranic school modes which will maintain the primary function of memorization of the Koran and the teaching of Islamic principles while, at the same time, enabling pupils to learn modern subjects needed in everyday life: (UNESCO, 1993).

IV. Reports and Research Studies from Jordan

UNICEF Jordan Country Programme published in 1993 a 66-page report on "*The State of the Jordanian Child: 1992/1993*" which is the first issue of a yearly publication on progress achieved and challenges faced in child care, protection and development in Jordan. The report presents up to date information and data on the following aspects: the economic, political and social environment, population, child health, nutrition, children in difficult circumstances, women and girls education, including ECD, environment and preschool education.

The Jordanian Higher Council for Science and Technology published a 166-page book, in Arabic, on "*The Jordanian child, indicators & figures, 1970-1990, nutrition, health and educational status*". (Al-Fakih, et al, 1992). The study comprises the demographic and economic status, health, nutrition and educational status, including a short section on the development of ECE in Jordan during the last two decades.

The status of kindergartens in Jordan is a comprehensive research paper submitted in the conference on "Towards a National Strategy for the Culture of Preschool Children in Jordan" in 1993 (Sharayri, 1993). The paper includes a limited review of literature on preschool education in several countries of MENA region in the 1960s and 1970s. It also deals with the development of ECE services in Jordan during the last three decades.

A nationwide research study on the Jordanian child (from 0-6 years) was carried out (in Arabic) by Touk and others, in 1987. Data was collected on children, their mothers, environment and ECE services. The sample comprised 3,000 families. The study found out that 8.3 percent of the children under six joined ECE institutions, with disparities between urban & rural communities. Most preschools were located in cities and they charged fees. Around half of the KG teachers were secondary school graduates.

V. Research Reports from Lebanon

The Education Sector in UNICEF supported three research studies pertaining to ECE in Lebanon in 1993. These studies are: *(i) a comprehensive survey of day-care centres,* (ii) *legislation related to early childhood,* both studies were carried out by Bashir Ismat, and (iii) *study on knowledge, attitudes and practices of mothers in educating children under 6 years of age*, carried out by Khadija Za'za'.

The first study estimates that only 2.2 percent of children under 3 are provided with day- care services. The buildings of the day-care centres are inadequate and lack safety equipment. The teaching staff are not professionally qualified for the job. Most families cannot afford to pay the cost of the ECCE services for their children.

The second study emphasizes the need to promote awareness of ECE concepts, the major role to be shouldered by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) in preschool education and the need to change the present legislation regarding nurseries which limits their role to 'safeguarding' children. A new policy for ECE is needed whereby NGOs and parents take a role in provision of updated services in congruence with international trends.

The third study focussed on the significance of developing knowledge, attitudes and practices of mothers to enhance the development of their children. Parent education programmes, mobile training units and specialized T.V. programmes were recommended to enable mothers to improve the climate for a healthy development of their children.

VI. Research Reports from Turkey

The Case of the Turkish Early Enrichment Project is a ten-year research project conducted by Cigdem Kagitcibasi on the impact of preschool, combined with mother training, on child development. This comprehensive approach was compared with custodial day care and home care, both with and without intervention. The research study was conducted in five low-income areas of Istanbul. Six day-care centres attached to factories were chosen, three providing only custodial care and three providing preschool education. The study began with a sample of 280 children, including all three and five year olds in the educational centres, a similar number from the custodial centres, and a group of children who were not in day care centres. Multiple assessments measured children's cognitive personality and social development, family context and day care context. It was found that test scores in intelligence and analytical ability of children whose mothers underwent training differed significantly from those of children whose mothers were not trained. Children at home and children in custodial centres benefitted the most from mother training. Children in educational day care, whose mothers had been trained, had the highest scores on almost every cognitive development measure. Mother training began to affect children's grades after only one year. Mother training had positive effects on the socio-emotional development of the children, on mother-child interaction and on mothers' role and status in the family. (Eldering, 1993).

Sevda Bekman described *the Preschool Education System in Turkey* in a research report, in 1993, in a journal article published in the "International Journal of Early Childhood", V 25, No. 1 and Turkey's preschool system and discussed the outcome of (1)

an investigation of the effects of social class and preschool centre type on child and staff behaviour; and (2) a project to develop an intervention model for disadvantaged environments, while comparing the impact of educational pre-schools, custodial preschools and home care on child behaviour, intelligence, personality and social development.

II. ECE PROFILES IN 18 MENA COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a spectrum of MENA countries' provision and practices pertaining to early childhood development in general and to early childhood care and education in particular. The most recent information available was collected from several sources, including UNICEF country offices, to prepare the profile of ECE and preschool education. The country profiles provide a historical background of preschool education services and, in some cases, whenever data was made available, a picture of ECE services within the national context of each country.

Each country profile begins with basic data on its population, HDI rank, GNP per capita, adult literacy rate, adult female literacy rate, children under 6, and education expenditure as percentage of GNP. These selected figures are overall indicators which give the reader a quick overview of the target country through the size of its population, its rank in the human development index (compared to 173 countries and areas) which is a composite index of three variables: life expectancy, education and income, gross national product per capita, to give an idea about a measure of the economic value claimed by each resident per year; adult literacy rate and adult female literacy rate, to have a rough idea about the education level of people over 15 years of age, especially for women who usually take a major role in bringing up their children in MENA region. The estimated number of children under six indicates the size of the target groups that are eligible to be provided with ECE services in each country, and the education expenditure as percentage of GNP shows the share given by each country to the education sector.

Each profile presents the national policy on ECE wherever data exists, coverage rates in nurseries, kindergartens and other preschool institutions, teachers and caregivers, percentage of children receiving the services, the curriculum and methodology applied in the programmes of operation, the cost and the constraints to the provision of the services in each country.

Wherever there were policies recognizing the need for ECE in some MENA countries, the policies were not put into practice due to shortage of human or financial resources or to lack of political will by the policy makers or the educational planners.

These profiles provide a general picture of preschool education and ECE services in 18 MENA countries which filled in the questionnaire sent to them. The countries are presented in alphabetical order. All MENA countries were included except for Kuwait, Qatar and Saudi Arabia which sent no data.

ECE Services in Algeria

Basic Data[2]

Population	25.6 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)[3]	107
GNP per capita (US$)	2330
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	57
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	46
Children under 6 years	About 5 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	9.1

Responses to the ECD questionnaire indicate that there are limited ECE services provided for children from zero to six years of age. Below is some data on ECE services in Algeria, excluding Koranic preschools as no sufficient data is available on their size and scale in the country.

Children Enrolled

There are fifty thousand children enrolled in ECE institutions, 10% of them (5,000 children), from zero to three years, in nurseries and 90% (45,000 children) from three to six in kindergartens. Urban children receiving these services make up 55% of the age group. These figures exclude children enrolled in Koranic schools which provide ECE services in the form of 3 Rs and Islamic education nationally. These schools accommodate large numbers of children of preschool age. It is estimated that 20% of children between 0-6 years benefit from ECE services, including those enrolled in Koranic schools.

Length and Content of ECE Operation

Children receive long-day services, i.e. around eight hours a day and 1280 hours annually. Below is a list of the daily activities in a typical pre-school programme:

Morning activities:

07:30 - 9:00 Welcome of children

09:00 - 9:20 Awakening activities :
- Drawing
- Pre-mathematics
- Observation of plants, animals

09:20 - 10:00 Going out
- Rhythmics
- Outdoor games

	10:00 - 10:30	Morning snack: in winter:milk, herb tea, cakes and chocolate in summer : juice and cakes.
	10:30 - 11:30	Awakening activities
Midday activities:	11:30 - 12:00	Manual activities
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
	13:00 - 13:30	Washing
Afternoon activities:	13:30 - 15:00	Rest time - Siesta for those between 2-4 years of age - 30 minutes rest for those aged 5 and renewal of activities
	15:00 - 16:00	Washing and afternoon snack
	16:00	Getting ready for home: Gathering of all the children in a big room.

Programmes Provided

Children in ECE institutions are provided with basic information and practices pertaining to nutrition, health, care and education. There is no unified curriculum for the provision of services to preschool children. The administration of each institution decides on the activities of the ECE programme for children.

Cost

The government contributes most of the cost in ECE nurseries, kindergartens and community-based centres, i.e. 5/6 of the total expenses. Therefore, parents pay part of the expenses for the services rendered to their children in public institutions. However, parents pay the total cost in private ECE institutions.

Policy

Preschool education institutions were legally authorized for the first time in 1976 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Works. These laws were updated in the 1980s (1983, 1985, 1988), then in the 1990s (1990, 1992). The most recent law, No: 382 of 1992, specifies in 35 articles the detailed policy pertaining to preschool services for children.

Constraints to ECE Services

The major constraints facing ECE services in Algeria are:

- Limited number of trained personnel in ECE (currently there are only about 4,000).
- Limited government funds allocated for preschool education.
- Koranic schools need to be surveyed, and concrete steps are required to develop and modernize the services provided for pre-school children.
- Teachers of pre-school education need to be trained professionally for their jobs.

ECE Services in Bahrain

Basic Data

Population	516,000
HDI Rank (among 173 countries or areas)	58
GNP per capita (US$)	6360
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	73
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	69
Children under 6 years	100,000
Education expenditure as % GNP	5.4

Background of Preschool Education

Preschool education is run completely by the private sector; pre-primary institutions are fee charging. They are outside the government educational system. Currently, most children of ages 3, 4 and 5 receive care and education in classes outside public schools against fees paid by their parents. In addition, many children attend informal school playgrounds organized by parents and volunteer groups, and in a few areas there are separate nurseries. Such a system means that free education in public schools begins, in effect, at age 6.

Preschool education has always been seen as necessary to meet the demands of working mothers with children under 6. The first kindergarten that offered preschool and primary education in Bahrain can be traced back to 1892 when the American Dutch Reform Church established a missionary primary school where Arabic, English, mathematics and religion were taught.

The interest of the Bahraini women in preschool education is strong, partly because of the large numbers of women entering the workforce. Since 1961, several members of women's societies and many retired Bahraini teachers with long experience in dealing with young children have been establishing their own nurseries and kindergartens. The first private nursery in Bahrain dates back to 1955 when an Egyptian woman founded a nursery in Manama, the capital city, for children from birth to age 3.

Types of Nurseries and KGs

By 1986, there were 76 pre-primary educational institutions in Bahrain classified into the following three categories:

1. Nurseries and kindergartens established and conducted by individual Bahraini or non-Bahraini citizens,
2. Nurseries and kindergartens attached to private schools, and
3. Nurseries and kindergartens established and run by women's associations.

Currently, nurseries and kindergartens in Bahrain are run and financed by private organizations or by individuals, both Bahraini and non-Bahraini. The Ministry of Education (MOE) involves itself only indirectly through the supervision of curriculum materials and methods of teaching. In financial matters and financial aid, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) is responsible for both nurseries and kindergartens.

Providing the Service

Most KGs apply the class teacher system, where each teacher is responsible for a specific group of children, subdivided into several smaller groups according to age. The teacher organizes the activities of all the children in the classroom for the entire school day. In addition, each teacher has one or more assistants whenever possible. The informal atmosphere in nurseries and kindergartens makes it possible for children to move around freely under the guidance of teachers.

Kindergarten teachers follow no set syllabus, but versatility and flexibility are requisites. The teachers evaluate the children in their care and watch for the children's responsiveness, imagination and progress. Preschool education aims at recognizing children's talents and inborn skills, making them psychologically secure, establishing the foundations for them to develop a sound personality full of health and moral vigour.

Cost

Parents of children in preschool institutions pay fees which vary from one place to another. For instance, in the late 1980s, private KGs charged fees within the range of $50 to $200 per month per child. Such disparities are due to the fact that some preschool institutions offer more services than others, such as meals or longer hours.

Children Enrollment in Preschools

Table 1 shows the development of children enrolled in private pre-primary schools in nine years i.e. 1977/1978 to 1985/1986. The increase in enrollment has been gradual. This is partly because not all towns in Bahrain have preschool facilities and partly because most non-working mothers prefer to look after their children themselves. It is worth noting that 90 percent of the total enrollment in preschools were Bahrainis.

Table 1

Children Enrolled in Private Preschool Institutions by Sex in Bahrain (1977/1978 to 1986/1987)

School Year	Male	Female	Total
1977 - 1978	1,239	1,164	2,403
1978 - 1979	1,353	1,268	2,621
1979 - 1980	1,549	1,382	2,931
1980 - 1981	1,962	1,768	3,730
1981 - 1982	2,313	2,086	4,399
1982 - 1983	2,636	2,417	5,053
1983 - 1984	2,699	2,516	5,215
1984 - 1985	3,576	3,155	6,731
1986 - 1987	4,009	3,599	7,608

Current Status of Preschool Education

There is no government policy geared to early childhood care and development at the national level. ECE services are left to the private sector. The Royal Decree No. 14 of 1985 deals with private educational institutions and the MOE bylaw No 36 of 1986 specifies the licensing requirements for the establishment of local and foreign private institutions, including pre-primary education establishments.

Academic Qualifications of Personnel

Table 2 compares between the qualifications of preschool education personnel in terms of their academic qualifications in 1980 and 1994.

The percentages in Table 2 show positive development in the academic qualifications of the preschool education personnel in a period of 14 years. In 1994, the university graduates more than doubled; there is a new category of teachers who are holders of 2-year university diplomas. Moreover, the percentages of secondary and below secondary school-graduate teachers decreased. However, there is a shortage in the professional training of most of the personnel. Only a small portion of them is professionally qualified.

Table 2
Academic Qualifications of Preschool Education Staff in Bahrain (1980 to 1994)

Degree	% 1980	% 1994
M.A. Degree	-	1.18
B.A. Degree	4.2	7.99
2 Yr. University	-	14.60
Secondary	87.5	73.32
Below Secondary	8.30	2.90

Current Enrollment and Institutions

In 1994, 1,345 children enrolled in nurseries and 6,925 in kindergartens, that totalled 8,271 children, marking an increase of 663 children from the 1985/1986 figures. Thus, ECE services are provided to 12% of the children under six. In 1994 there were 94 private preschool institutions (i.e. 15 nurseries and 79 kindergartens) country-wide.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **ECE concept:** The activities in most pre-school institutions focus on the formal pre-learning approach, through teaching the 3 Rs, and not on ECE issues.

- **Buildings:** Preschool buildings are mainly rented and not designed for educational purposes. They are, therefore, unsuitable for and incompatible with modern child development requirements.

- **Government Policy for ECE:** Having no clear policy for ECE and leaving complete responsibility for preschool education to the private sector has had its disadvantages. More than half of the centres have no adequate facilities for children. Many classrooms are overcrowded, with numbers reaching 47 children in a classroom in some KGs.

- **Funding:** As nurseries and kindergartens are private enterprises, they must make profit, or at least make enough funds to meet their expenses. Thus, unqualified teachers have been recruited to provide an immediate solution to the problem of teacher shortages. It is expected that MOE or MOLSA will intervene to subsidize fees for children from needy families to enable them to benefit from ECE services.

- **Curriculum:** There is no concrete curriculum for preschool education in Bahrain. There is a need to prepare a curriculum which caters for current international developments in ECE and ECCE approaches, methods and techniques.

- **Training:** Preschool education staff need to be trained professionally for their jobs, taking into consideration modern approaches in training of ECE staff.

ECE Services in Djibouti

Basic Data

Population	0.5 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	163
GNP per capita (US$)	2220
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	15
Children under 6 years	About 100,000
Education expenditure as % GNP	2.5

ECE Services

ECE services are provided by private institutions and through Koranic community-based pre-schools. No public preschools institutions are reported in the country. MOE is facing the problems of high percentage of illiteracy (adult female illiteracy rate is 85%). However, MOE provides supervisory and psychological guidance and counselling for preschool children.

Private Preschool Services

The number of private preschool institutions is very limited (4 KGs), rendering services to less than 500 children, around 0.3% of the eligible target group (0-6 years). The service is provided to children between 3-6 years; nothing is provided for children under 3. Parents pay around $1,000 per annum per child as tuition fees. The daily programme runs for five hours, totalling more than 1000 hours per annum. The cost is so high that only the high income parents can afford to provide their children with ECE services by the private sector. However, other parents provide their children with religious education by sending them to Koranic preschools which are community based.

Koranic Preschool Services

Koranic preschools are abundant in Djibouti. Data is not available on their number or their enrollment. However, these institutions are supported by the community, NGOs, UN and international organizations, especially by the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). In these institutions children learn the Holy Koran, reading, writing and religious instruction i.e. the fundamentals of 3 Rs and Islam and how to perform prayers. The main emphasis is on theoretical knowledge, at the expense of skill-oriented activities.

Koranic preschool teachers are generally characterized by good memory, honesty, modesty and total dedication to their mission. Yet few of them receive the education and training which are needed in today's world. A Koranic preschool is usually run by a sheikh who has sometimes assistants.

Main Constraints to ECE Services

- Absence of ECE government policy.
- Lack of government funding and resources for ECE services.
- MOE is involved in eradication of illiteracy, thus not being able to give priority to ECE services.
- Lack of qualified personnel in private KGs and in Koranic preschool institutions.
- Need to develop new curricula to introduce practical skills over and above the theoretical knowledge in Koranic preschool education.
- Need to provide children with co-curricular activities in order to develop their cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.
- The high percentage of illiterate women being (85%) indicates the poor conditions under which children grow up in. Intervention programmes to eradicate illiteracy among parents (especially mothers) will bring about a more conducive environment for ECD and ECE interventions.
- Lack of sound baseline data on ECE and Koranic preschools.

ECE Services in Egypt

Basic Data

Population	53.6 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	124
GNP per capita (US$)	610
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	48
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	34
Children under 6 years	About 10 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	6.0

Background on ECE Services

A main aspect of the upbringing of a child in the Arab culture is how he/she is moulded according to adult expectations, either through domination or overprotection. Also, authority rests upon one person in the family; the father or a father figure. This creates an autocratic system which prevents the full growth of the individual in various areas. It promotes submissiveness and apathy. Researchers in Egypt found out that to make the child submit to adult expectations, persons in authority frequently use corporal punishment, especially fathers with low incomes. Middle class parents exert psychological pressure by threatening to withhold love or affection, or other things that create anxiety. These parents also evoke fear in children, either through corporal punishment or recounting stories of fictitious horror characters. All these practices limit freedom of thought, self- expression and maturity in children.

Consequently, parents limit the development of creative abilities in children. One of the studies carried out in an Egyptian village pointed out that obedience was a main value in social up-bringing of the child. The father frequently punishes the child when he/she fails to observe the set rules of behavior.

Although both rural and urban societies in Egypt have undergone a lot of changes since the 1950s and 1960s, more contemporary studies, from the 1980s, reveal that little variation to past methods of social upbringing exists. The 1980s' studies point out that parents still use negative practices in bringing up their children. Such practices produce obstacles to the social maturity of the child, especially among low income families which represent the great majority of society.

A study on the characteristics of the Egyptian child revealed that middle class children suffer from great anxiety, whereas children of low income families are conservative and traditional. Also by contrast to middle class and high class families, low income families tend to reject any new method of social upbringing.

The fact that 47% of rural families, 51% of urban families and 49% of families at the national level live either on or below the poverty line; that 52% of the total population are illiterate; and 66% of women, in particular, are illiterate, reveals the underdeveloped conditions a child grows up in.

A large scale project is being undertaken jointly by UNDP, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the Health Improvement Association. The objective of the project is to establish criteria for the mental, psychological and physical development of Egyptian children in their local environment. The target group is children in the 2-6 age group. This kind of initiative could serve as a very important guideline for parent education.

Current Data on ECE

ECE Institutions:

The total number of ECE institutions is as follows (1991):

Public	266
Private	1567
Community-based centres	3117
Total	**4950**

As the community-based centres are considered private institutions because they are not subsidized by the MOE, it could be concluded that the private sector runs around 95% of ECE centres in Egypt.

Children in ECE Institutions:

- ECE enrollment (children aged 0-6): 533,999.
- Percentage of children aged 0-6 receiving ECE services: 7%.
- Percentage of working women with children 0-6 years of age enrolled in ECE institutions : 84%

These figures indicate that about 93% of preschool education population do not benefit from ECE services.

ECE Staff

There were 33,767 preschool personnel in 1991, i.e. with a teacher/child ratio of 1:16. Data on the sex of the staff indicates that nearly all ECE staff are female. Most of them are not professionally qualified. They need training in pedagogical subjects and current approaches to ECE.

Length and Content of ECE Operation:

ECE services are rendered for 8-9 hours daily, i.e. for most of the day. The programmes provided include knowledge on nutrition/medical care and education components. However, these programmes are of poor quality. Some of the activities prescribed in ECE centres are: language development, number exercises, observation of nature, songs & music, poetry & stories, physical exercise and outdoor play. The daily activities in a typical preschool programme include the following:

Morning activities	: washing hands, eating breakfast, going to toilet
Midday activities	: organized playing activities
Afternoon activities	: free playing

Funding:

As almost all ECE institutions are private, they charge tuition fees for the services they provide. Not all social classes can afford to benefit from the services provided. The socio-economic level of children involved in ECE services is limited to those belonging to high-income (more than $6,000 per annum) and middle-income families (estimated roughly to earn $ 3,000 - 6,000 per annum).

National Policy

A national council for childhood and motherhood was established in 1988 in Egypt. Its main purpose is to set up a national policy for childhood and motherhood in the fields of social and family care, health, education, culture, the media and social defence.

Main Constraints to ECE Services

- Current services do not integrate social, emotional, physical, intellectual and moral development of children into ECD services.
- **Coverage**: 93% of children (0-6 years) do not have access to ECE services.
- **Lack of awareness** of the importance of ECE services on the part of the general public.
- **The high cost** of ECE services makes them unaccessible to the majority of people.
- **The curricula** implemented in the centres lack updating and enrichment.
- **ECE staff** require intensive and specialized training to reach an optimum standard of excellence (at all levels of involvement, including administrators).

ECE Services in Iran

Basic Data

Population	59.9 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	103[4]
GNP per capita (US$)	2490
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	54
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	43
Children under 6 years	Over 11 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	4.1

Background of Preschool Education

Preschool education is not officially part of Iran's existing educational system. Outside the family, preschool education is confined to day-care centres run by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOH). Consequently, preschool education is not controlled by the Ministry of National Education (MOE).

The first authorization for establishing a kindergarten was given 50 years ago to Ms. Bor Saveh in Tehran. However, prior to that, other kindergartens had been unofficially active in Iran. The "Jolfa Esfehan" kindergarten under the supervision of the Armenian Church celebrated its 100th year in 1993. Seventy years ago, Ms. Farahanian who had studied as an ECE instructor in Russia, began a serious effort to establish a kindergarten in Tehran. Fifty five years ago, Mr. Baghchehban in Tabriz and Ms. Dowlatabadi in Esfehan established kindergartens providing ECE services for children under 6.

From 1951 on numerous kindergartens were established in Tehran and other large cities, using new methods of instruction. The Farhad Kindergarten, Mehran Kindergarten, Raveshe Now Kindergarten, Shiva and Kushesh kindergartens were among the successful experiences in preschool education in the country.

From 1966 to 1978 many training courses were organized for preschool instructors, including those implemented by women's organization and the Welfare Organization. In addition to these, monthly seminars and regular discussion sessions by instructors were among other related activities during this period.

With the increase in number of working mothers, the need for a growing number of kindergartens with different working hours was felt. It can be said that the main force behind preschool age children becoming associated with kindergartens has been the growing female labor participation rate. After over 50 years of formal education in Iran, preschool education is not compulsory in the country yet.

The preschool centres in Iran cover three stages: nursery (0-3 years of age), kindergarten (3-5 years of age) and pre-primary (5-6 years of age).

The nurseries and kindergartens covered by the MOE are those organized for their own staff and teachers. Other organizations, ministries and factories also have special ECE arrangements for their own staff. In 1984, a law was passed making it obligatory for children to attend the one year courses prior to the first grade. The MOE had established such courses in many of its schools, but this law was reversed in 1989 and these classes stopped. However, those run by the private sector and other ministries or organizations continue to function.

Besides the short-term training provided by the Welfare Organization for the training of instructors, several universities in Tehran and other cities have ECD as a bachelors degree specialization. The graduates of these degrees can function as planners at the existing ECE centres.

Two non-governmental organizations - the Centre for Research on ECD and the Puya Association for Educational Research - have focussed on preschool education. The children's Book Council of Iran has among its main tasks the review of literature for preschool aged children. The Puya Association has been active since 1988 and accomplished a variety of tasks on ECE - including seminars, meetings and research projects. The Centre for Research on ECE has been active since 1991 and worked on preparing resource books on ECE in the country.

The activity of ECE experts in Iran today is a reflection of how serious their endeavors are. They attempt to raise the awareness of the public and policy-makers to the importance of this period of life. They believe that ECE can provide a bright prospect for the educational future of the country[5].

Day-care Centres[6]

Day-care centres in Iran were established shortly after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. They are of two types: public and private. Public day-care centres are few in number and have been created largely to provide care for children whose parents work. These day-care centres are financed in part by the state and in part by fees paid by parents (roughly 7 per cent of the parents' salary). They are not well equipped and are poorly organized.

Private day-care centres get permission for their establishment from MOH. They provide ECE services for healthy children between three months and six years old. The monthly payments for day-care are fixed by MOH, widely varying according to the area. Access to some day-care centres is possible only for parents who are able to pay very high fees. According to the law, each day-care centre cannot accept more than 100 children and only women are granted permission to open centres. A proprietor of a day-care centre must also be a Muslim of Iranian descent.

Day-care Programmes

The ECE programmes of day-care centres include the following elements: religious, social, cognitive, affective and physical development. Children are encouraged to learn language skills, creativity and problem solving.

ECE Through Educating and Supporting Parents

ECE services are provided indirectly through informal educational programmes for parents. The radio and television have several programmes to provide information and to upgrade and develop the knowledge and understanding of parents in various subjects related to child development, rearing and education. Some programmes are designed to meet parents' needs and problems pertaining to ECE. School is another source of parent education. There are usually monthly meetings at schools to discuss children's problems or to listen to the lectures of a child development specialist. The third type of parental education is conducted by the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Affiliated with MOE, it organizes seminars, workshops and courses for interested parents on a variety of subjects related to childhood and education. Parent education has many advantages: both care-givers and children can benefit; family responsibility can be reinforced and broad coverage can be achieved at relatively low cost.

Data on ECE Services

Table 3 presents data on ECE institutions and children in 1993 in Iran:

Table 3
ECE Institutions and Children in Iran (1993)

# of ECE Institutions					# of Children			
Government		Private	Com-based	Total	Government	Private	Com-Based	Total
Urban	Rural							
1300	460	615	388	2763	82,517	61,250	30,970	174,737

These figures include nurseries (0-3 years) and kindergartens (3-5 years) but not pre-primary children between 5-6 years.

ECE Staff

Not all staff are presently trained. All founders of such institutions have to have a relevant degree and permission from the Welfare Organization. There is a plan to institute a 2-year training course for all staff in the future. The current number of staff personnel involved in providing ECE services is 12,231. The adult/child ratio is 1:14.

Length of Operation

The duration of ECE services varies with the institutions, lasting between six and eight hours daily. The timetable in welfare institutions is from 8:00 am to 14:30 pm, in private institutions from 8:00 am - 16:00 pm and in community-based centres it varies between the two mentioned timings.

Curriculum

All Welfare Organization institutions provide the same ECE programme. However, private institutions use a variety of methods and instruction, i.e. books, teaching aids etc., and their quality and calibre varies depending on the "management" of the ECE centre. There is no prescribed curriculum for preschool education in Iran.

However, the coverage of kindergartens has been limited due to lack of facilities and teachers. Approximately one third of a million children attend preschool and pre-primary education centres. This makes up about 2 percent of the eligible target group (children under 6 years of age). Most of these children have working mothers.

KGs affiliated to MOE open only from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. Some KGs function as child-care centres. They are sponsored by different ministries, organizations and factories to serve the children of the employees. These day-care centres are open during the hours of employment, usually from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Pre-primary Education

The pre-primary education programme is a one year period in which five-year-old children are prepared for the primary school environment and programme. Furthermore, in the bilingual areas, where Persian is not the mother tongue of children, children will be acquainted with the Persian language.

Table 4 illustrates the number of public schools, and teachers at the pre-primary level, during the decade of 1983-84 to 1992-1993. As shown in Table 4, the number of schools for this level has been normally increasing, except for the decrease during the academic years 1984-85 and 1992-1993. At the pre-primary education level there is a large number of private kindergartens acting under the supervision of the Welfare Organization. In the academic years of 1984-85 and 1992-1993 there has been a rapid growth in the number of private rather than public kindergartens. Furthermore, the data related to private kindergartens is not included in the developmental activities of the MOE since they are not under the jurisdiction of the latter. As shown in the figures, almost all of the teachers at this level are female.

Table 4

Number of Pre-primary Schools, Children and Teachers in Iran (1983/1984 to 1992/1993)

Year	Number of Pre-primary Public Schools	Number of Children			Number of Teachers		
		Students	Girl %	Boy %	Teachers	Female %	Male %
1983-84	2735	202899	50	50	7875	99.95	0.05
1984-85	1276	77774	46	54	4413	99.84	0.16
1985-86	1732	106986	47	53	5221	99.92	0.08
1986-87	1911	123437	47	53	5812	99.86	0.14
1987-88	2162	146409	47	53	5905	99.93	0.07
1988-89	2547	177979	48	52	6382	99.87	0.13
1989-90	3210	217496	48	52	7247	99.85	0.15
1990-91	3586	227492	48	52	7946	99.81	0.19
1991-92	4114	252513	48	52	8841	99.77	0.23
1992-93	3003	168864	48	52	6885	99.64	0.36

* There are no private kindergartens under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Coverage:** As the enrollment in preschool education is about 2% of those who are under 6 years of age, ECE services need to be expanded on a large scale to reach the target groups through different methods, i.e. parent education, media, NGOs, etc.
- **Training of Teachers:** Personnel working in day-care centres, nurseries and kindergartens need to be professionally trained to enable them to provide ECE services and not be content with the traditional roles of keeping children safe while playing.
- **Low Motivation:** Kindergarten teachers have relatively low social and economic status in Iran. This is due mainly to the low pay they receive.
- **Curriculum:** There is a need to prepare a curriculum for preschool education, incorporating objectives, activities, methods, monitoring and assessment.

ECE Services in Iraq

Basic Data

Population	18.7 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	96
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	60
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	49
Children under 6 years	About 4 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	5.1

Background on Preschool Education

The first preschool institution was established in Iraq in 1926. Forty years later the number of these institutions had increased to 65. During the last two decades, these institutions increased quantitatively from 135 (in 1969) to 639 (in 1993). The number of enrolled children also increased from 14,530 (in 1969) to 95,289 (in 1993). The number of kindergarten teachers increased gradually from 551 to 5,129. Table 5 shows the development of preschool education i e children, teachers and kindergartens from 1969 to 1993:

Table 5

Development of Preschool Education in Iraq (1969/1993)[7]

Year	# of Children		Total	# of Teachers (Female)	Adult/ Child Ratio	# of KGs
	Male	Female				
1968/1969	8198	6332	14530	551	1:26	135
1972/1973	8783	6800	15583	665	1:23	137
1977/1978	29859	26488	56347	2603	1:22	306
1982/1983	41319	38127	79456	4175	1:19	507
1987/1988	39850	36978	76558	4572	1:15	594
1992/1993	49480	45809	95289	5129	1:19	639
Annual Increase			23.2%	34.6%		15. 5%

Table 5 indicates that there was a gradual decrease in the adult/child ratio which is attributed to the government' s effort to increase staff employment

Policy of Preschool Education

The first KG was established in 1950 by law No. 13; this law was substituted by another law, No. 11 of 1978, comprising 26 articles, then by another bylaw, No. 24 of 1987, whereby the MOE was entrusted not only to supervise KGs but also to formulate their educational policies, plan and administer them. The bylaw gave preference in employment in KGs to holders of university degrees in education, psychology or ECE.

Curricula of Preschool Education

The first KG curriculum was formulated in the 1960s, then it was developed in the 1970s and 1980s. During the 1980s, manuals were prepared for KG teachers emphasizing the "integrated experimental units". These units were developed to formulate the core of the curriculum. Special emphasis was given to the role of play and children's manipulation of toys. Thus, the ECE curriculum comprised the following:

> Use of toys and games in the playground and in the garden, indoor and outdoor games, teaching games (construction blocks and tools), musical games and instruments and playing with toys.

The ECE evaluation form, developed in 1989, assessed the child as a whole, incorporating the physical, motor, cognitive, affective, social, moral and health aspects of the personality.

Training of Staff in Preschool Education

Two Iraqi universities initiated in the last two decades special undergraduate programmes for ECE education. The graduates get their B.A. in ECE education. The MOE also initiated this specialization in the public teacher institutes starting with 1989/1990. MOE organized on-the-job teacher training courses for key educational personnel (head-teachers and supervisors) and teachers to introduce the curriculum of the integrated units. Until 1993, 2,726 teachers had undergone long-term training programmes and 2,974 had been exposed to short term ECE ad hoc courses. Seventy six educational leaders were trained on the implementation of the new ECE curriculum.

Health Care in Preschool Education

Health education courses were organized for the KG headteachers and teachers. KGs were provided with health sheets on each child in all KGs. These sheets were expected to be filled by the KG personnel until the child was transferred to the primary school. MOE tried to maintain hygienic conditions in the buildings of preschool education.

Day-care Centres

Day-care centres for children aged 0-4 are run by the MOSLA and the local NGOs. The centres provide working women with access to dependable child care with some emphasis on educational activities. Between 1979 and 1989, the number of day-care centres grew from 71 (serving 6,817 children) to 212 centres (serving 9,246 children) an increase of 29.3% in the number of centres and 13.5% in the number of children served. However, MOSLA subsidizes children at risk (between 0-6 years) through residential centres providing food and accommodation to them. Table 6 indicates the number of these centres, their staff and the children they served.

Table 6
Data on Day-care Centres Run by MOSLA in Iraq (1993)

Item	Public	Private
# of Institutions (0-3 yrs)	150	55
# of Institutions (3-6 yrs)	37	-
# of Day-care Staff	826	310
# of Children (0-3 yrs)	6026	4166
# of Children (3-6 yrs)	390	-

Provision of ECE Services

Special attention was given to activities related to early childhood development in general, and ECE services in particular, after the Gulf War. The increase in women-headed families, combined with large-scale expansion of the urban informal sector of employment have created pressure on both the government and UNICEF to improve the quality and quantity of services dealing with child trauma. Iraq has realized that the quality of care provided to a child has a direct measurable bearing on the child's health, education and nutritional status. Long-term exposure to illness, poor nutrition, family stress, political and war pressures are all factors contribute to school drop-out rates, unemployment, delinquency and poverty. One thousand care-givers and teachers from all governorates were trained, through UNICEF, on the scientific methods of child care.

Despite government emphasis on improving the quality of ECD and ECE services, for economic reasons limited progress was achieved in the expansion of the number of day-care centres. The number of nurseries run by the MOLSA and the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) has remained unchanged whereas the number of nurseries run by the private sector has shown moderate expansion. Both MOLSA and GFIW are running 85 nurseries. The private sector has increased its services from 80 to 120 nurseries.

On the other hand, the number of kindergartens run by MOE to prepare children for primary schools dropped from 646 in 1990/1991 to 639 in 1992/1993. Though the number of

kindergartens has declined, the number of children admitted has increased from 86,503 in 1990/1991 to 95,289 in 1992/1993. This reflects increasing demand for ECE services.

ECE Services in Northern Iraq

Data received on the questionnaire indicated the following information on ECE services in Northern Iraq in 1994:

Table 7

Profile of ECE Services in Northern Iraq

Item	ECE Services	
	Public	Private
# of Institutions (0-3 yrs)	4	2
# of Institutions (3-6 yrs)	53	2
# of Personnel	401	-
# of enrolled children (0-3 yrs)	229	261
# of enrolled children (3-6 yrs)	10,000	100

The above figures indicate that ECE service is still marginal if the 3 million population needing it is taken into consideration (more than half a million are expected to be under 6 years of age). The percentage of beneficiaries is about 2% only.

The percentage of working women with children between 0-6 years of age is as low as 5%. This is due to the fact that female illiteracy rate is high in Northern Iraq. The percentage of urban children receiving ECE services is 10%. The length of operation in ECE institution is 4 hours daily, i.e., 1,200 hours annually in both private and public centres.

ECE Programme Survey in Northern Iraq

There is no general policy in Northern Iraq for ECE services except for the teaching staff. International aid is offered by various UN agencies and NGOs to provide for ECE services in the form of training courses.

A typical preschool programme comprises songs, games and story telling during morning and midday activities. The personnel who provide the service are female secondary school graduates (85%) and holders of 2 year university diplomas (15%).

Most of the children benefiting from these services are poor. The socio-economic levels of children involved are categorized as follows:

High income	($6,000+ per annum)	2%
Middle income	($3,000 - 6,000)	5%
Low income	(Below $3,000)	8%
No income	($0)	85%

Main Constraints to ECE Services

In Iraq in general, and in the northern and southern parts in particular, ECE services suffer from the following constraints:

- Insufficient trained staff
- No financial facilities to provide ECE services
- Non-availability of transportation facilities for children.
- Impossibility to update services due to economic problems.
- Insufficient involvement of women in ECE services. Early childhood programmes may fail if they ignore the role of women in ECE and family life. Special attention should be given to eradicate illiteracy among women (where the rate of illiteracy is 51%) and also among men (illiteracy rate is 40%). Literacy programmes create awareness in the significance of early childhood intervention programmes.

ECE Services in Jordan

Basic Data

Population	4.3 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	99
GNP per capita (US$)	1640
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	80
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	70
Children under 6 years	About 800,000
Education expenditure as % of GNP	4.4

Background of Preschool Education

Early childhood development needs are rarely met adequately in Jordanian homes. Large family sizes, short intervals between births, financial constraints and lack of parent awareness create an environment that is not conducive to promoting the development of early childhood skills. Many parents are ignorant of their role in this area because public awareness campaigns focus mainly on nutrition and health, while ignoring cognitive and psycho-social development needs. Thus, there is real need for more parent-oriented programmes to increase parenting and child-rearing skills and knowledge.

ECE services in Jordan are limited mainly to services rendered in the form of preschool programmes in nurseries (0-3 years) and kindergartens (3-6 years). Most of these institutions belong to the private sector (i.e. owned by individuals or societies). They are located mainly in the cities, i.e. in Amman, Irbid and Zarqa governorates, while remote areas in other governorates have little or no access to such facilities. Preschool education is not compulsory in Jordan and these nurseries and day-care centres are mainly run privately. Although the Ministry of Education (MOE) maintains some control over standards, curricula and facilities in kindergartens, all but 4 of the country 624 preschools are run by the private sector and local NGOs.

Preschool education was initiated in the 1950s and continued to be marginal until the seventies. However, the number of institutions increased considerably after 1979, the International Year of the Child. Table 8 shows the development in the number of these institutions from 1970/1971 to 1993/1994.

Table 8
Development of Preschool Institutions in Jordan (1970-1994)

Year	# of Institutions
1970/1971	35
1975/1976	158
1979/1980	200
1985/1986	358
1986/1987	466
1990/1991	573
1992/1993	624
1993/1994	705

In 1993, the 624 preschool institutions accommodated 54,755 children (25,170 of which were girls, i.e. 46%) educated by 2,390 female staff members (adult/child ratio is 1:23). Although the number of kindergartens and enrolled children have increased considerably in recent years, the preschool enrollment rate is estimated at only 20% of eligible children. It rises to over 30% in urban regions and drops to below 10% in poor or rural areas. (These ratios apply to children between 4-6 years of age only).

Research on ECE in Jordan:

In the 1980s, a comprehensive study on the Jordanian child (0-6 years) was conducted by a team of experts (Touk and others, 1987), covering 3000 Jordanian families. The study collected information on children's demographics and on the social, economic, health and educational services provided to them. The study also surveyed preschool institutions and found out that the buildings were mainly rented and not especially constructed for ECE services. The staff was totally female with an age average of 24 years, 50% of which were secondary school graduates and 42% diploma holders (two years of university education). 56% of them were never trained professionally for their jobs. 77% had only one year of experience, and many regarded their jobs as only transitory, leading to high turnover rates. Only 4% of KGs provided specialized teachers to teach subjects such as art and physical education and provide counselling. Curricula were prescribed by the administration of the preschool institution. There were a lot of differences in the services provided to children and in the number of hours of the ECE operation.

In 1991, a review of the preschool education sector in Jordan revealed that many kindergartens run on an ad hoc basis, with no set curriculum and a very limited scope of activities. Teaching methods were found to be typically traditional, and the use of games and other education aids limited or non-existent. Where games and toys were in use, they were found to be generally of poor quality and often not appropriate to the children's age.

In October 1993, the Jordanian National Association for Childhood Education organized, in cooperation and coordination with UNICEF, a two-day conference on "A National Strategy on the Culture of the Preschool Child in Jordan". The status of preschool education was presented in many research papers by participants from MOE, MOSLA, Queen Alia Fund (QAF), UNICEF, Jordanian universities and Jordanian associations. The research papers emphasized that many day-care centres and KGs operate without clear curricula and with limited facilities and activities. Most teachers were found to be professionally unqualified to teach preschool children. These teachers find difficulty in providing quality services or put up with overcrowded classes and low wages. The better-equipped and properly-staffed facilities are beyond the budget of all but wealthy families. The educational reform programme targets this sector with a plan to increase facilities, capabilities, and enrollment rates.

A UNICEF-supported survey on ECD practices in Jordanian homes was carried out in 1992/1993. It revealed that most homes lacked toys, stimulating objects, and especially books. The survey showed that on a nation-wide basis, early childhood stimulation practices seemed reasonable in terms of mothers giving their infants time, affection and attention, though in most cases the women could improve the quality of interaction and stimulation they gave their newborns (especially in terms of language acquisition). About two-thirds of mothers received wrong advice concerning bad practices towards their newborns. Mothers in rural areas were less informed on good early childhood stimulation techniques than mothers in the large urban centres.[8]

Current Status of Preschool Education

Table 9 gives basic data on numbers of institutions, teachers and children receiving ECE services in 1994.

Table 9
Numbers of Kindergartens, Teachers and Children Enrollment in Jordan (1994)

Item	Numbers
# of Institutions (0-3 yrs)	25
# of Institutions (3-6 yrs)	680
# of Teaching Personnel	2460
# of Children (3-6 yrs)	63755
Adult/child ratio	1:26

The percentage of children receiving ECE services is high in urban areas, especially in Amman, reaches almost one third of the children in the age-group (0-6 years), decreases in other cities to a range between 15-20%, reaches below 10% in rural areas and is even nil in some remote areas.

Government Policy

As preschool education is not compulsory, it is MOLSA and the private institutions that run nurseries for children (0 - 3 years). MOE bylaw No. 3 of 1994 states that the preschool is the first stage of the educational system. Its length is two years and the government opens KGs within its capacity and supervises the technical and administrative issues of KGs.

Jordan officially ratified the convention on the Rights of the Child on 24 May 1991. His Majesty King Hussein endorsed the World Summit of Children Declaration and Plan of Action in 1991. Sector-specific working groups have been formed to refine the draft national strategy, translate the broad summit goals into specific actions, identify roles and partnerships, and determine costs and financing.

ECE Curricula

The MOE prohibits the use of textbooks for children in preschool institutions; however, most of the kindergartens use pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-mathematics, (the three Rs) in their provision of ECE services, especially for KG II, i.e. 5 - 6 years of age children. In 1993, a manual for kindergarten teachers, focusing on the intellectual, cognitive and psycho-social development of young children, was produced and put into use at kindergarten-teacher training sessions. The manual is expected to be an important step in standardizing kindergarten curricula and improving standards.

Qualifications of ECE Staff

Table 10 shows the academic qualification of the staff working in ECE institutions in 1994. Most of the staff lack professional training on up-to-date trends in ECD, ECCE and ECE services. To meet this need, UNICEF cooperates with Queen Alia Fund, (QAF), in launching a community outreach programme aimed at addressing the shortage of pre-school facilities, especially in rural and remote areas. The programme involves a team of ECD specialists visiting villages throughout the country in an effort to mobilize village-based NGOs and community groups to provide space and resources for ECD centres and kindergartens. The QAF and UNICEF also run one of the few specialized training programmes for kindergarten teachers in Jordan, providing basic and advanced training to about 120 teachers per year.

Table 10
Academic Profile of ECE Staff in Jordan (1994)

Degree	Headteacher %	Teacher %
University graduate	23	10
Diploma (2 University yrs)	69	83
Secondary or less	8	7

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Coverage** is a problem because services are concentrated primarily in the major cities and are limted to families who are able to pay the tuition fees.
- **Cost**: Tuition fees range between $416 in rural areas and $1,338 in some kindergartens in urban areas. Besides tuition fees, parents are requested to pay for transportation, food (if requested) and health facilities. These financial commitments limit the percentage of the beneficiaries.
- **Quality**: The quality of service is limited mainly to a formal pre-learning approach, focusing on the 3 Rs. Intensive action needs to be taken to change the quality of services to become of an ECE nature, applying child-centred and active learning approaches.
- **Buildings**: As most ECE institutions are not especially built as KG institutions, but occupy rented buildings in crowded areas and near the main roads, those buildings are not conducive for proper ECE services.
- **Training**: There is a great disparity in the services provided by ECE institutions due to differences in resources. To enable them to provide up-to-date ECD and ECE services, intensive training courses need to be organized on a national level to qualify all the staff involved.

ECE Services in Lebanon

Basic Data

Population	2.8 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	102
GNP per capita (US$)	2150
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	80
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	73
Children under 6 years	About half a million

Introduction

Facts about the nature of early childhood, as known in modern times, have not been properly gathered in Lebanon. The vast amount of knowledge generated in the twentieth century, particularly in the early seventies with the birth of Project Head Start and High/Scope Foundation in U.S.A., about the critical importance of the early years of life and its impact on subsequent development, has not yet found its way in government policy or the traditions of the Lebanese family. During the seventies, when many countries were busy assimilating the wide knowledge about the various dimensions of human development and translating it into national policies and goals, Lebanon was witnessing the early eruptions of the civil war. Thus, traditions, misconceptions and fragmented pieces of knowledge prevailed in child care practices, even among most educated groups who, like others, had survival issues as their primary concern.

The long years of war and the shortage of funds available to government agencies, with the severe economic crisis, have further handicapped any efforts to promote essential improvement to the situation of children. Presently, there is a major shortage of accessible and affordable kindergarten and day-care facilities in the country. Moreover, the public centers currently in operation are generally of substandard quality, lacking modern educational tools, and are in poor physical conditions and often severely overcrowded. These centers are typically staffed by unqualified child-care workers with little or no training to help them assume critical roles in addressing the psycho-social and cognitive needs of the children. Private child-care centers are usually better equipped but the staff are not necessarily competent enough to meet the developmental needs of children.

The Pre-primary Education System

Recognizing the need for preschool, the Ministry of Education (MOE) started adding pre-primary classes, for children 3 to 5 years of age, to some primary schools, in the late sixties. A pre-primary education unit was set up within the ministry and was charged with creating a preschool education programme. Training of teachers was the responsibility of the MOE Center for Educational Research and Development. By the end of the sixties, 40 per cent of public primary schools had already included preschool classes, with 29,110 children enrolled in it. By 1986/1987, 70 per cent of primary schools had preschool classes, but catered for only 11,844

children. No official explanation is given as to why the number of preschool children enrolled decreased so much, but reasons might be attributed to damage of schools, displacement of teachers, and the overall deterioration of the situation of public education as a result to the civil war.

Pre-primary education is optional. Children may enter at the age of three, four, or five and are promoted annually till they reach six, the age for admission in primary school. In 1989, 62% of all preschoolers were enrolled in private schools (53% males), 21% in private subsidized facilities (51% males) and 17% (22,180 children) in public schools (49% males). Though no data is available on the current status of preschools, various expert testimonies indicate the deplorable conditions of these facilities, including the poor physical environment, inadequate structures, lack of equipment and supervision, combined with rigid curricula and low teacher qualification. Nonetheless, some private preschools remain an exception, but costs of enrolment are prohibitive.

Main Concerns

Towards the end of the last decade, extensive efforts were made to promote child survival in Lebanon. Compared to these efforts, little has been done to promote optimal growth and development of children zero to six years of age. Recent research has provided overwhelming evidence of the critical importance of this period of life, when basic abilities and coping skills are formed and when the potential is created for individuals to develop into functional and contributing adults. Although survival issues are necessary prerequisites to development, they are not sufficient to promote the well-being of children.

With the deterioration of the socio-economic situation, brought about by the long years of war, the development of this segment of child population has been hampered by the lack of clear government policy regarding child care and development, lack of knowledge on child care and development among families and communities and inadequate utilization of community resources.

National Policy

The Lebanese government had already ratified the Convention of the Rights of the Child on 16 October 1990 and signed the World's Summit for Children Declaration and Plan of Action. However, there is no stated national policy for ECD or ECE in Lebanon.

Current Delivery of Early Childhood Education

Responses to the questionnaire clarified the following data on ECE in Lebanon:

ECE Institutions:

There are 148 ECE institutions providing education services for children from birth to three years of age. Two thirds of them belong to the private sector (97 nurseries). Fourteen nurseries only belong to the public sector while 37 are community-based centres. The profile is different for children 3-6 years whereby 870 kindergartens are public and 792 are private.

ECE Personnel:

Most of the personnel involved in ECE are neither trained nor professionally qualified. Trained personnel are very limited in number i.e. 270 in public, 615 in private and 242 in community-based centres. Their academic profile is shown in Table 11.

Table 11
Academic Profile of ECE Personnel in Lebanon

Degree	%
University Graduates	9.40
Two-years University	25.74
Secondary Education	8.17
Less than Secondary	56.68

These percentages indicate that the majority of care givers and ECE personnel have poor academic background (i.e. below secondary school education).

Enrolled Children:

Around two thirds of the children from 0-3 years get ECE services in community-based centres (10,425 children), while 3736 enjoy services in the private sector, and only 539 belong to public institutions. The profile is different for children between 5-6 years whereby the private sectors (both free and non-free) render most of the services. In the case of free KGs, parents pay a nominal fee for each child and the state subsidizes the owners of a KG according to the number of children enrolled in it. Table 12 shows the numbers of children benefitting from ECE services in 1993. The percentage of children receiving ECE programmes (135,504) in Lebanon is around 21% of the total number of children between 0-6 years.

Table 12
Number of Preschool Children by Sex by Authority in Lebanon (1993)[9]

Sex	Public	Private (Free)	Private (Fee Charging)	Total
M	10933	13344	45847	70124
F	10943	12141	42296	65380
Total	21876	25485	88143	135504

Daily Activities

Daily activities in ECE centres range between 4-5 hours daily, and between 960 - 1200 hours annually. Morning and midday activities comprise warm-up, songs, conversation, story telling, painting, handicraft and sensori-motor activities. ECE centres provide nutrition/medical care and education for children. However, public centres use a formal pre-learning approach in rendering the service to the 3-6-year-old children, while private centres adopt mainly the child-centred approach.

Cost

The cost per child per year varies a lot in ECE centres (from $ 0 to $2,000). Parents pay the cost of the service in private pre-school education while the government contributes by providing free education to children who start pre-school within the public sector at 5. This sector is around 15% of all preschool enrollment.

Socio-economic Level

The socio-economic level of enrolled children involved in ECE services indicates that they belong to three social classes:

10% high income	i.e. $ 6,000+ per annum
50% middle income	i.e. $ 3,000-6,000 per annum
40% low income	i.e. below $ 3,000 per annum

Constraints to ECE Services

The main constraints in implementing ECE programmes in Lebanon are :

- **Policy:** There is no overall government policy for ECE in Lebanon. There is a need to mobilize the MOE and the Ministry of Social Affairs to develop a well-defined policy on ECE, clearly stating goals and objectives and means of achieving them. Also important will be for the government to develop a set of enforceable minimum

quality standards for nurseries and kindergartens in operation in the country.

- **Cost:** No government expenditure is earmarked for ECE. Only parents who are capable to pay tuition fees enjoy ECE services for their children in private nurseries and kindergartens.

- **Coverage:** 79% of children between 0-6 do not benefit from any ECE services. Urban children get the lion's share of the intervention programmes. Rural children lag far behind.

- **Training:** There is a need to provide kindergarten and day-care personnel with training programmes to upgrade the existing kindergartens and nurseries professionally and to provide them with educational aids, games and other ECE materials.

- **Quality:** The quality of ECE services needs a lot to be improved.

- **Awareness:** Lack of public awareness, especially among mothers, of both the importance of ECE and techniques for its provision. There is a need to organize orientation programmes for mothers, media campaigns and distribution of booklets with ECE messages.

ECE Services in Libya

Basic Data

Population	4.7 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	87
GNP per capita (US$)	5310
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	64
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	50
Children under 6 years	About 1 million
Education expenditures % of GNP	9.6

Current ECE Services

Very limited information is available on ECE in Libya. ECE services are provided through day-care centres, kindergartens and Koranic preschools. The main data sources are the National Organization for Social Security and UNICEF country office in Libya. In 1985, there were 1,051 teachers providing ECE services to 15,030 children (3 - 6 years) with the adult/child ratio of 1:14. In 1993, it is reported that 1,178 teachers are providing services in 49 public institutions for 8,876 children only (i.e. 59% of the previous figure in 1985). Four private kindergartens are reported to be in operation. It is estimated that the percentage of children receiving ECE services is around 2%, excluding those enrolled in Koranic schools. Children stay around five hours in the day-care centre, with an average of 1,300 hours per annum.

Curriculum and Daily Activities

There is no unified curriculum for preschool education in Libya. ECE institutions apply different curricula prescribed by the administration of the preschool institution concerned. However, most of the ECE services for children are provided in the form of daily activities including: language development exercises, songs and music, observation of nature, creative art (e.g. painting and drawing), number exercises, physical exercises and outdoor activities.

ECE Staff

In terms of academic background, 80% of the personnel involved in ECE programmes are university graduates. The remaining are of less academic qualification. Professionally most of the preschool personnel are not trained for their jobs as providers of ECE services.

Cost

The government contribution to ECE services is not reported; however, the government covers all the expenses of the public preschool institutions. Parents pay tuition fees for children in private day-care centres and in kindergartens. Each parent pays around $150 per child per

annum. Therefore, the level of children involved in ECE services is limited to those who can afford to pay tuition fees.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Government policy:** There is no clear government policy on ECD or ECE services to be provided for preschool children.

- **Awareness:** There is no public awareness of the significance of ECE or of early childhood development intervention for children 0-6 years of age. There is a need to advocate ECE programmes, create awareness and build political will in order to increase demand on ECE services.

- **Training:** ECE staff need to be professionally trained for the job. Special training programmes need to be organized to upgrade their competencies and skills as providers of ECE services. Training should cover the sheikhs (teachers) of the Koranic schools too.

- **Supervision:** The level of supervision of KGs and other day-care centres is underdeveloped. There is a need to upgrade the supervisory staff, organizing training programmes in order to qualify the ECE supervisors as teacher-trainers as well as to let them acquire the basic skills required to implement their job as ECE leaders.

- **Literacy and Parent Education:** There is a need to promote literacy and parent education in order to increase their knowledge of child development as well as to improve their child rearing practices. Literacy and parent education programmes in Libya will create the climate for the family to provide children with ECE services in preschool institutions and not limit the care to mothers (half of whom are illiterate) and to other members of the family. Such programmes can also help facilitate collaboration between parents and those who are providing ECE services in the various settings.

- **Coverage:** As the estimated coverage is around 2% only, there is a need to expand ECE services all over the country by strengthening national resources, changing attitudes towards the significance of early intervention and expanding the ECE services, through different approaches, to the remaining majority of children under 6 who do not benefit from preschool formal or non-formal programmes.

ECE Services in Morocco

Basic Data

Population	25.7 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	119
GNP per capita (US$)	880
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	64
Adult female literacy rate (%15+) 1993	50
Children under 6 years	About 5 million
Education expenditure as % of GNP	9.6

Preschool Education

Limited preschool education is provided for around 2% of the age group i.e. children from zero to six years of age. In 1988, there were 75,600 children and 3,700 teachers in preschool institutions (for 3 - 6 years) with the adult-child ratio of 1:20. In 1991, the number of children increased by 10% reaching 81,300 children (between 3-6 years) and 3,750 teachers, with the adult/child ratio of 1:22.

No reliable statistics are available on nurseries and day-care centres which provide ECE services to children between 0 and 3 years of age. The family in Morocco considers that the main role of the mother is to take care of the child at home in these early years. Whenever she needs to leave the house, she depends on members of her extended family.

Koranic Schools

The shortage in ECE services is partially supplemented by Koranic preschools, which are religious institutions, providing religious education and the basics pertaining to the 3 Rs. These institutions are abundant in rural areas and in the old parts of cities in Morocco.

These Koranic schools (*Katateeb*, in Arabic) are spread throughout Morocco, though their exact number is not known. They are believed to have started shortly after the expansion of Islam in North Africa. They intended to teach to youngsters the Holy Koran and the principles of Islam. Their tasks were expanded to involve the teaching of the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, i.e., the three Rs. The curriculum comprises learning the alphabet, memorizing the Holy Koran, number exercises and principles of worshiping.

These Koranic schools benefit from the methods being applied in primary schools, such as the use of blackboards in teaching. However, there is a need to develop these schools in several domains including curricula, training of teachers, methodology, administration modernization and development. Regional and international cooperation is sought to help MOE carry out this task for the benefit of the children who join these schools all over the country.

International Cooperation to Develop Preschool Education:

In 1993, UNICEF assisted in conducting an in-depth study of Koranic preschool teaching. The results of this study indicated the need to restructure the Koranic pre-schools sector, publish new manuals, train teachers and develop an official curriculum. MOE, UN Organizations and NGOs held a seminar to design a Plan of Action to carry out these tasks. The in-depth study showed weaknesses of Koranic preschools in Morocco, including lack of legislation and of a state system for the training of trainers. Based on the findings, the government is now examining how to organize the system, in terms of the whole institution itself, curriculum and teacher training, so that Koranic preschools, which include traditional and modern approaches, become more effective as to the children's social, cognitive and psychological development.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) and in particular the Department of Primary Education (DPE) are responsible for the Koranic school system receiving children in the preschool age group. The Koranic school system is privately run, but the pedagogical supervision is a task of the DPE. Bernard Van Leer Foundation assisted the DPE in the project targeting preschool teachers of the Koranic preschool (*Kuttab*), supervisors and preschool children attending Koranic preschools. In 1994, phase 1 of the project became operational in five educational districts: Rabat, Sale, Temara, Be Slimane and Knitra. The project intends, among others, to innovate the educational practice in the Koranic preschool in order to better respond to the ECE needs of children while maintaining the particular role assigned to the Koranic schools by religious and cultural tradition.

A joint project of University Mohammed V ATFALE team of action researchers, Bernard Van Leer Foundation, UNICEF, MOE and Ministry of Youth & Sports (MYS) was under implementation in 1994, aiming at upgrading the cadre of preschool teachers. The overriding goal was to develop and try out a new approach to preschool education and related teacher training by placing the child in the centre of activities and by using local resources creatively. This joint venture has developed residential in-service training coming from all over the country, training in the child centres, creation of local resource centres, a comprehensive manual and a preschool curriculum. The project received contributions from UNICEF to support the organization of a first conference on preschool education for the Maghreb countries and to publish a preschool manual/curriculum.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Absence of Policy:** In the absence of policy and strategies at the national level, there is a need to promote awareness of the significance of ECE in promoting the integrated personality of the child. Such awareness will enable planners and policy makers to identify a clear policy for ECE.

- **Coverage:** Only 2% of the eligible target children are provided with ECE services in preschool centres. These are mainly in cities. There is a need to expand these services quantitatively to cover more children, especially in the rural areas, and qualitatively, in the form of active learning services.

- **Teacher Training:** The academic and professional qualifications of the staff in KGs and in Koranic preschools require upgrading and keeping up-to-date with modern trends and techniques of training for preschool education.

- **Curriculum:** In the absence of curricula for the preschool sector (both in KGs and in Koranic preschools), there is a need to develop a feasible curriculum incorporating the objectives, teaching/learning activities, outcomes and assessment procedures needed in pre-primary care and education.

- **Buildings and Equipment:** There are no enforced regulations concerning the premises and equipment used for pre-primary education, especially in the case of Koranic preschools.

- **Financial Resources:** MOE and many government ministries are involved in promoting basic education, women literacy and meeting basic learning needs. However, there is severe underprovision of finances necessary for effective and efficient implementation of pre-primary programmes.

- **Parent Education:** MOE needs to develop, in coordination with other authorities, an integrated system for parent education (through women literacy, clubs, mass media, parent-teacher associations, publications etc..) to create the climate for ECE services for children at home, in preschool centres and in their local communities.

- **Literacy rates:** As half of the females (15+ years) in Morocco is illiterate, and as more than one third of the population is also illiterate, it is expected that the climate at home would not be conducive for the provision of ECE services in a formal or non-formal manner.

ECE Services in Oman

Basic Data

Population	1.6 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	94
GNP per capita (US$)	5650
Adult literacy rate (%15+) 1985	47
Adult female literacy rate (%15+) 1991	32
Children under 6 years	About 350,000
Education expenditure as % of GNP	3.7

Background of Preschool Education

Koranic schools (known as *Kuttab* in Arabic) were the only form of education in Oman prior to the late 19th century. The schools are believed to have started shortly after Oman embraced Islam in 632 A.D. These schools spread throughout the country, though their exact number is not known. They provided basic education for children of both sexes under age 10. In addition to teaching the Holy Koran and the principles of Islam, *Kuttabs* also taught reading and writing of the Arabic language, and some elementary arithmetic[10].

All *Kuttab* schools were privately owned and operated. They usually did not have fixed or special buildings. Teaching took place in various locations, (e.g., under the shade of trees, in mosques, in teacher's homes or in courtyards). Teachers were often selected to teach by virtue of their age, knowledge of Koran and good reputation in the community.

Kuttab schools co-existed with government-owned schools prior to the 1970s. They tended to be more community based, serving a broad cross section of the public as they could be found in even the smallest villages in the country. *Kuttabs* are still in operation in Oman, but with the beginning of public education, their importance has diminished.

Early Childhood Education: An Introduction

Preschool education has been neither universalized nor made compulsory in Oman, though the demand for it is increasing. With more and more women engaged in economic activities outside the home, coupled with an increasing awareness and appreciation of early learning, organized care for children in the form of creche and kindergarten is becoming an important concern in the community. MOE statistics for 1988 indicate that a small proportion of preschool age population (3-5 years) of children (i.e. 6.6 %) enrolled in preschools.

Early childhood education in Oman includes day-care centres and kindergartens. Both offer ECE services for children between 0-4 and 4-6 years respectively.

Day-care Centres

Day-care centres started in Oman in the mid 1970s with the influx of women into the workforce. However, no real governmental involvement was seen prior to the 1980s. Most day-care centres that emerged in this period were privately initiated and existed independently. The establishment of these centres required only a certain amount of money. There were no governmental requirements to control the standard and quality of services provided to children.

The first step toward establishing an organized strategy for child care was taken in 1981 with the establishment of a Directorate General for Women's and Children's Affairs (DGWCA) within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL). With this came an increased focus on the well-being of children medically, socially and educationally. Also contributing to the quality of child care and policy, a Royal Decree (1985) established the National Committee for Child Care (NCCC). The NCCC comprises members from MOE, MOSAL and MOH. It was assigned responsibilities involving the preparation of policy and strategies appropriate for child care, devising relevant programmes and projects, application of policies, encouraging field research and studies and to stuying issues related to the child that have been agreed upon in international, regional and Arab fora.

All day-care centres were required to register with the MOSAL in 1985 and the DGWCA was given the responsibility of supervising all day-care centres in the country and of ensuring that required standards are maintained. In 1985, the first registered day-care centre was opened. By 1986, there were 11 registered centres, and by 1989, there were 17, located in various regions of the Sultanate. In 1993, the number reached 46 (MOSAL, 1994).

Length of Operation and Curriculum of ECE in Day-Care Centres

Day-care centres generally enroll children from 6 months to 4 years of age. They operate throughout the year from 7:00 am to 3:00 pm (official working hours in Oman are 7:30 am to 2:30 pm). These centres provide services of caretaking for young babies, and seek to stimulate and make children between 2-4 years socialize. The curriculum includes play, recitation of the Koran, singing, drawing and learning of numbers and letters. Those centres also toilet train the children and teach them other habits such as cleanliness, obedience and good learning habits.

Cost of ECE Services in Day-care Centres

Because day-care centres belong to the private sector, the government does not interfere with regard to the fees charged. As a result, fees vary greatly depending on the type of services provided, for example extended hours, transportation, meals etc. DGWCA requires that the centres ensure that the proportion of childminders and caregivers to children be 1:6 (for babies between 6 month and one year) and 1:10 for children between 1-4 years. Such measures have an impact on day-care costs incurred by parents, which range between $200 and $1,000 per child per annum.

Kindergartens

Unlike day-care centres, which are licensed by MOSAL, kindergartens in Oman are supervised by the Department of Private Education at MOE since all KGs are privately owned and operated. Prior to 1973, there were no KGs in the country. In 1980, there were 17 classes enrolling 396 children of both genders. In 1984, the number of KG classes reached 69 with a total enrollment of about 1600 children. In 1986, there were 144 KG teachers providing ECE services to 2450 children. In 1991, there were 205 KG teachers and 4000 children. In 1993/1994, there were 68 kindergartens with 238 staff members providing ECE services to 4,728 children.

Most kindergartens have no special buildings. Rather they exist as part of private primary schools. Thus, in analyzing the development of preschool education in Oman, it is more appropriate to view growth in terms of number of classes and children enrolled rather than the number of ECE institutions.

Length of ECE Services in KGs

ECE services in KGs are shorter than those of day-care centres. They operate for four hours per day; i.e., around 600 hours annually. KGs have a two-year duration. They normally take children from ages 4 to 6. The study period is divided into two levels: the first level is KG I (*rawdha* in Arabic) and the second level is KG II (*tamhidi* in Arabic).

ECE Curriculum in KGs

The curriculum is left entirely to the discretion of the KG administration. However, MOE specifies teacher qualifications, class size, teacher/child ratio, dress code, hygiene, age range to be admitted, teaching/learning activities and length of school day. MOE legislated that not more than 20 children ought to be in one class and no male teachers should be employed to teach children of this age. The present curriculum in KGs is an adaptation of that of the MOE in Kuwait. The main concepts in KG I are: cleanliness, safety and family. These are introduced through drawing, colouring and discussion. KG II deals with more cognitive concepts, such as distance, time, weight, size, shape, relationships, differentiation and matching. The curriculum is mainly child-oriented; it focuses on activities and experiences rather than drilling the alphabets. It exposes children to real life situations through trips and presentations of actual objects in the classroom. The objective of the curriculum is to attain a balance among the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

Training of ECE Staff

Because day-care centres and kindergartens are privately managed, neither MOSAL nor MOE have a programme to prepare or train teachers for KGs or day-care centres. In 1988, MOSAL with UNICEF began to train Omani secondary school girls to teach in day-care centres. In 1990, another course was organized. Currently, the number of trained Omani personnel is quite insufficient. Such training courses are envisioned to be a temporary solution until proper

training is offered either in teacher training colleges or in the university. As the Department of Private Education of the MOE is playing a supervisory role regarding all the KGs in the country, these institutions require guidance and training on how to develop the skills of the teacher and to implement the curriculum. This has become a huge burden on the small department which is unable to meet all demands. Regional and international assistance is needed to meet such training needs.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Training:** There is a need to organize professional training programmes on modern trends in ECE methods and techniques for the key personnel in MOE and MOSAL who supervise KGs and day-care centres respectively.

- **Coverage:** As ECE services are limited to 6.6% of children under 6 years and mainly to children in urban areas, such as the towns of Muscat (the capital), Muttrah and Salalah, there is a need to expand these services to all parts of the country, especially to the rural areas.

- **Cost:** As preschool institutions are privately owned and operated, they charge high tuition fees, a matter which limits the number of beneficiaries to those who can afford to pay the tuition fees in full.

- ***Kuttabs*:** Koranic schools (*Kuttabs*) now operate in summer when schools are closed, and some are open in the afternoons during regular school days. These Koranic schools still provide services mainly in the rural areas. Therefore, they require support in matters pertaining to training of teachers, curricula, administration and modernization to enable them to render much needed ECE services to their local communities.

- **Literacy rates:** Adult literacy rates in the country (47%), and adult female literacy rate (32%) constitute a considerable constraint to ECE services. Illiterate parents usually lack awareness of the significance of early childhood intervention programmes. Eradication of illiteracy programmes are expected to have a direct impact on improving and promoting ECE services.

ECE Services in Palestine

Basic Data

Population (West Bank and Gaza Strip)	1.89 million
GNP per capita (US$) - West Bank	1688.1
GNP per capita (US$) - Gaza Strip	693.3
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	89
Children under 6 years (West Bank and Gaza Strip)	About 400,000

Preschool Education

Preschool education is not compulsory in the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS). In East Jerusalem, compulsory education begins at age 5, rather than age 6 as in WB and GS, so kindergartens are part of the government education cycle for children of government and private schools. UNRWA does not provide any preschool education services in Jerusalem, WB or GS. It provides basic education services for Palestine refugee children between 6-16 years, totalling around 400,000 pupils, in the five fields of UNRWA operations, namely Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, WB and GS.

As a result, pre-primary services are completely decentralized and unorganized in WB and GS, relying mainly on the initiative of private institutions, individuals and local NGOs. UNICEF is assisting in developing ECE services for Palestinian children under 6 through the UNICEF offices in WB and GS. Preschool education as a whole is therefore difficult to quantify.

As information is not available on preschool education among Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, this review will be limited to the current situation in the WB and GS. Moreover, with the absence of data on nurseries and day-care centres rendering services for children 0-3 years, the review will deal with preschool institutions established for children from 4 to 6 years, i.e. kindergartens only.

Kindergartens and Children

Table 13 shows estimates of the number of kindergartens and children in the WB and GS. In general, these figures do not include East Jerusalem and they are limited to children from 3 to 6 years old. Some children attend one year, others attend 2 years or more.

Table 13
Numbers of Kindergartens and Children in West Bank (1987) and Gaza Strip (1990)

Area/Field	Kindergartens	Children
West Bank	297	20,123
Gaza Strip	120	10,300
Total	417	30,423

Table 14 shows percentage estimates of WB and GS kindergartens by supervising authority: Union of Charitable Societies, Private (including individuals, private schools and Islamic private institutions), women's committees and municipal councils.

Table 14
Supervision of Preschools in West Bank (1987) and Gaza Strip (1990)

Authority	West Bank %	Gaza Strip %
Private	44	46
Charitable Societies	38	12
Women's Committees	12*	30
Municipalities	6	8
Quakers	-	12

* The number of kindergartens run by women's committees rose considerably during the last seven years. Therefore, this percentage does not reflect the current status of kindergartens in the West Bank (1994).

The above two tables demonstrate two basic problems facing preschools. First, they serve only a small percentage of the eligible population, from 3-6 years. It is estimated that 20% of WB and GS children benefit from the services of pre-primary education. Second, kindergarten institutions are administered by widely diverse organizations, many lacking overall plans for development or curricula. Even though women's committees now account for most new preschools; these committees also lack unified planning goals.

Research Studies

Three studies have been undertaken on the situation of preschools in the WB and GS. The Early Childhood Resource Centre in Jerusalem conducted a comprehensive survey of WB preschools in 1987/1988. In Gaza, Save the Children/USA undertook an evaluation in 1991 of 30 preschools, representing all the supervisory authorities cited in Table 14. A third study was conducted by UNICEF, WB in 1994, assessing the status of ECD within the WB, GS and East Jerusalem. The major findings of the three studies are summarized below:

Kindergarten Teachers:

* The majority of kindergarten teachers are not professionally qualified for their jobs as providers of ECE services. Most teachers have only secondary certificates while few others are holders of a diploma (completion of 2 years in the university). Both categories have no specialization in early childhood education and development. Awareness of ECE issues is almost non-existent among KG staff who consider themselves as caregivers or, at most, as providers of basic literacy and math skills.

* Motivation and morale among KG staff are low and poor as a result of lack of training, stimulation and support.

* Salaries are extremely low, contributing to the lack of motivation and to the high turnover among the KG staff.

Site:

* The majority of preschools is located in unsuitable buildings, lacking basic facilities such as electricity, running water, toilets or heat.

* Outside play areas, where they exist, tend to be unsafe for children.

* Adequate cleanliness is not maintained.

* Spaces inside and outside classrooms are not adequate. Classrooms are overcrowded with children. Some classes accommodate 50-60 children with no space for them to move.

Resources:

* Almost all preschools have insufficient finances. Shortage of funds caused the closure of some pre-schools in recent years.

* There is a shortage in basic equipment, such as writing material and toys. Educational material is often inappropriate because it is in a foreign language.

* Due to lack of training and motivation, KG staff are unable to improvise educational and play materials.

* Preschools suffer from low level of family/community involvement.

Home-based Child Development

The Palestinian societies are characterized by multiple caregiving rather than by caregiving restricted to the mother or parents. In some cases, caregiving responsibility extends to neighbours or friends, in others, to the members of the extended family, i.e. mother-in-law or grandparents who might have important roles in assuring a child's healthy

development. To the extent that home-based child development programmes can involve relevant caregivers in ways that reinforce and improve their childrearing skills, they will be more successful programmes. While preschools offer one potentially influential sector for early child stimulation, the home environment remains of crucial importance.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Financing:** The problem of preschool financing results in inadequate physical and human resources. Financing strategies should form part of any development plan.

- **Training:** Initiatives to upgrade the professional level of KG teachers through systematic training programmes should be supported and, when appropriate, expanded.

- **Family involvement:** Programmes to increase family involvement in preschools should be encouraged as a means of bringing child development messages to parents.

- **Community awareness:** Due to poor community awareness of ECE issues, efforts of UN organizations, NGOs and community leaders should concentrate on building community awareness and support for preschool services, and promoting policy formulation and standardization.

ECE Services in Sudan

Basic Data

Population	25.9 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	173
GNP per capita (US$)	400
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	27
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	12
Children under 6 years	About 5.5 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	4.8

Background of Pre-primary Education

The first pre-primary centres were first founded in the nineteenth century as part of missionary schools. Music, play and drawing were introduced into their curriculum. In the first decade of this century, the Catholic mission established schools in Khartoum and Omdurman to which kindergartens were attached. The second attempt in kindergarten education was soon carried out in the Coptic College in Khartoum, a school that mainly served the Egyptian community. However, the first kindergarten opened by the Sudanese was not established until 1930. Like Catholic and Coptic kindergartens, it was also attached to an elementary school.

Preschool Programmes[11]

Today, there are four types of childhood education facilities in the country: (1) privately owned elementary school kindergartens, (2) privately owned kindergartens or nurseries, (3) the department of social welfare kindergartens, and (4) association kindergartens. All these institutions provide ECE services to only 6% of the eligible target group of children under 6.

The school kindergarten is the oldest of the four. The first was started in the early 1900s by the Catholic mission. These are few in number (nine kindergartens). In most cases, only children of the rich can afford them. These kindergartens emphasize discipline and the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic (the 3 Rs). Music and singing are also included in the curriculum. The social atmosphere of these kindergartens is very rigid. The kindergarten is, in effect, a downward extension of grade 1.

The second type of ECE centre is founded by the individual initiative of certain women. These kindergartens began to appear in large cities. They are of two categories. The first category KGs, which constitutes the majority, operate in private homes or in rented houses. In most cases, there is no space for children to play in, there are no adequate toilet facilities and the rooms are not properly ventilated. Moreover, the women in charge of these kindergartens have no professional training. These facilities are more akin to playgroups, child care, or baby-sitting services than to a nursery or kindergarten. There is neither a curriculum to be followed nor objectives to be achieved, children are merely safeguarded from harming themselves while playing.

In the second category of institutions, which consists of a mere three or four kindergartens in the entire country, facilities are better and staff personnel are more qualified. The kindergartens are housed in special buildings, some staff have received some training, and they engage the children in a wider range of activities.

The third type is the form of kindergarten established by the department of social welfare in the early 1970s in Khartoum. There are 12 such kindergartens. Each is assigned a small corner in a youth centre of a family club. All 12 have the same daily timetable, which is drawn up at the headquarters of the department. Some of the staff have received on-the-job training in the form of a few general lectures on child development.

The fourth and most recent type is the kindergarten established by different associations of workers in both governmental and private sectors. These kindergartens usually cater to the children of the members of the association. Most are housed in the association's club (a building used in the evening by the members of the association for social purposes). These kindergartens are similar to those of the social welfare kindergartens in the sense that what they offer the children reflects the level of training of the staff working in them.

Khalwas: Koranic Schools

All four types of ECE are found in Khartoum and other big cities. In most rural areas, the *Khalwa* is still the only means of education; in a few rural places where an elementary school exists, the *Khalwa* becomes a sort of preschool centre. Moreover, the number of existing ECE centres is still very small compared to Koranic schools (*Khalwas*). In 1991, there were about 94,878 children in such centres while the number of children in *Khalwas* was around 161,906. The ECE centres were one third the number of *Khalwas* as specified in Table 15.

Table 15
Data on Preschool Education in Sudan

Type	# of Institutions	# of Teachers	Children Enrollment
Kindergarten	1266	2898	94,878
Catholic Mission KGs	9	41	2776
Khalwas (Koranic Schools)	3751	4734	161,906
Total	5026	7673	259,560

The Koranic schools provide preschool education for two-thirds of all children between 4-6 years enrolled in all pre-school centres. These Koranic schools are established by local efforts and their children are mainly 4-6 years; however, older children might join the *Khalwas* as well.

Main Characteristics of *Khalwas*

Khalwas are established by local communities. Their curriculum is mainly based on the Holy Koran and a single teacher - *sheikh* - who will seldom have received any formal pedagogical training. *Khalwas* are low-cost operations, relying on locally available materials for buildings, furnishings and equipment.

Characteristics of *Khalwa* Teacher - *Sheikh*

The Koranic school teacher has many qualities: a good memory, an ascetic outlook, patience, faith in his mission, humility and frugality. He is concerned to discharge his duties well in order to please God rather than to achieve material gain.

Professional Training of ECE Staff

A major problem facing the proper development of kindergartens in the country is the lack of training institutions for preschool educational personnel. Most of KG teachers have no professional training. To rectify this, the Ministry of Social Welfare, with the help of UNICEF, established a centre for training ECE staff in 1983. The centre provides a six-month training course in child development, nutrition, art, music and the production of teaching materials. There are plans to extend the course to a one-year duration.

Ahfad University for Women is also providing ECE training for KG teachers. A non-governmental institution established in 1966, the Ahfad University for Women offers a bachelors degree in preschool education. However, many graduates do not opt to work in kindergartens because of low salaries. Some graduates have established their own kindergartens and some are employed by the association's kindergartens. Ahfad University for Women also trains women from rural areas. These village women come into Ahfad through the university's Rural Extension Programme and receive up to six months of training, including knowledge of how to set up a kindergarten in their villages.

Parental Involvement in ECE Services

Apart from formal preschool education, the rearing of children in the Sudan is the sole responsibility of the family. Parents are not provided with any educational programmes. Even in radio and television, programmes directed toward family matters and issues related to the education of children are virtually ignored. These programmes usually concentrate on health issues. However, there is clear awareness in many parts of the Sudan of the importance of parental involvement in promoting the development of their young children. Plans for new primary kindergartens included parents not only in the programme but also in planning the kindergarten. The MOE brings rural women into training institutes from time to time for training in child development. Ahfad University for Women has taken the leadership in addressing the issue of parental involvement in the development of young children. It does so by incorporating parental involvement concepts in its ECE programmes and by focussing research on ECD intervention.

Constraints to ECE Services

- Ethnic differences in the Sudan mean that each group has its own customs and traditions, which are reflected in how each group treats its young children. This makes the task of ECE important not only for the sake of individual child, but also as a means of enhancing harmony in the provinces of the country.

- The government has assumed no responsibility for establishing KGs or nurseries to the MOE. The task of preschool education and ECE services has been left to the initiative of the people and private organizations.

- MOE, although accepting the ideas of KGs since the 1970s, is unwilling to establish KGs in its existing schools. It is simply maintaining its old role as the licensing authority for those who want to open KGs.

- As this age is dominated by science and technology, MOE is expected to search for new modes in which Koranic preschool (Khalwas) keep their essential mission of teaching the Holy Koran while at the same time preparing children to learn the science of the modern age. Such a modernization and development is achievable within the framework of a comprehensive national strategy for education. Regional and international cooperation is needed to develop Koranic schools in Sudan as these schools constitute a common denominator for the majority of preschool institutions.

ECE Services in Syria

Basic Data

Population	12.8 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	81
GNP per capita (US$)	1000
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	65
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	51
Children under 6 years	About 3 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	4.6

Background of Preschool Education

Before independence in 1945, there were about thirty preschool institutions attached to missionaries and private enterprises in the whole country. Thirty years later, preschool centres belonged to three authorities: private, General Women Union (GWU) and Teachers' Syndicate (TS). The distribution in 1976/1977 was as follows:

Table 16

Distribution of Preschool Education Centres,Teachers and Children in SAR (1976/1977)

Authority	# of Centres	# of Teachers	# of Children	Adult/Child Ratio
Private	253	818	27225	1:33
GWU	93	266	8997	1:34
T.S.	4	12	457	1:38
Total	350	1096	36679	1:33

Most of the 350 centres were rented premises which did not qualify for ECE services. Most of the teachers were not professionally qualified to provide ECE services to children. The adult/child ratio is very high (1:33), a matter which has adverse effects on the provision of services to children.

In the 1980s, more nurseries and kindergartens were established both by private and public institutions. More than one public organization took the initiative to provide preschool education services to children under six years of age. These public authorities include: MOE, MOSLA, GWU, T.S., General Union of Workers (GUW), and other government departments. In the 1990s, it was decided to allocate licensing of nurseries to MOSLA and licensing of KGs

to MOE. In 1990 there were 170 private nurseries. Government departments gave facilities for the establishment of nurseries on their premises for children of working women whenever the target children were five or more in number. Such nurseries took the shape of day-care centres with poor facilities. The concepts of ECE were not practised by the day-care personnel. Recently lots of public, NGO and private efforts were exerted to develop preschool education and provide ECE services.

Current Status of Preschool Education

Kindergartens provide some sort of ECE services to children between 3 and 6 years. In 1990, 1251 KGs accommodated 4528 teachers providing services to 91925 children (adult/child ratio 1:20). Table 17 classifies the distribution of the KGs, teachers and children per authority:

Table 17
Distribution of KGs per Authority in SAR (1990)

Authority	# of KGs	# of Teachers	# of Children	Adult/Child Ratio
Private	338	1520	51505	1:34
T.S.	338	595	10500	1:18
G.W.U.	170	677	16684	1:25
G.U.W.	258	643	5816	1:9
MOSLA	80	82	3210	1:39
MOE	61	170	3046	1:18
Other Ministries	6	841	1164	1:1.4
Total	1251	4528	91925	1:20

The above table shows disparities among the different authorities providing ECE services to children from 3 to 6 years. The ratio of teacher to child shows great discrepancy ranging from 1:1.4 to 1:39. The total number of children receiving ECE services (91925) did not exceed 7 % of the total population of the 3 - 6 years age group in 1990.

Current Services Through Nurseries

In 1991, 28224 children of working mothers (from zero to four) joined nurseries. The national aim is to accommodate 20% of the target group of children by the year 2000, with

special emphasis to be given to rural areas. Nurseries are requested by government authorities to focus on cleanliness of the day-care staff members and cleanliness of place, milk bottles, kitchenware and nutrition. Private nurseries are very small in number compared to public nurseries. Almost all nurseries suffer from inappropriate accommodation. These centres were not established as day-care centres. Neither the location nor the size are conducive to care services. What makes the problem even more difficult is the lack of professional qualification of the staff who provide the services. All these nurseries are licensed and supervised by MOSLA.

Government ECE Policy

In 1991, MOE issued the government policy towards preschool education: the unified system of KGs. The bylaw comprises 10 chapters and 32 articles. The issues incorporated involved objectives of KGs, activities, licensing, enrollment conditions, educational environment (administrative, teaching and supervisory), evaluation, transfer from KGs, attendance, holidays, teachers' council, cooperation between KG and family, KG board of administrators, income and expenditure of KGs.

MOE is the overall technical and administrative authority in charge of ECE services in KGs. MOE educational supervisors are nominated to monitor the ECE services in KGs all over the country. MOE organizes on-the-job training courses for the professional upgrading of provision of services. As KGs are established and administered by different private and public associations, MOE plays a unifying role through the supervisory services it provides to all KGs.

Other Data on ECE Programmes:

Duration:

The length of the programme is between 5 and 7 hours daily (7 - 12 noon, or 7 - 2 pm). The total number of hours is between 1200 - 1680 hours per annum.

Working Women:

Children of working women benefiting from ECE services are about 50% of the target group enrolled in preschool education all over the country.

Urban/Rural Children:

The ratio of urban/rural children enrolled in preschool education institutions is 60/40.

Percentage of Beneficiaries:

It is estimated that about 10% of the children under 6 are benefitting from the ECE services. It was reported that 10% of eligible children under 6 years of age were enjoying ECE services all over the country in 1994. However, the government target is to raise the ratio by 20% by the year 2000.

Parent Involvement:

The general Women's Union organizes special programmes in local communities to create awareness of ECE services by parents, with special emphasis on women in the rural areas.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Transportation:** Transportation causes a problem in providing services to preschool children in many localities, especially in rural areas.

- **Cost:** The high cost incurred by parents for the ECE services provided for their children in KGs limits the number of beneficiaries. The average tuition fee in a private KG per child per annum is between US$ 150 and $ 200. However, in public KGs and nurseries, employees pay a small percentage of their salaries for the services provided for their children.

- **Curricula:** Each administrator decides the curriculum to be applied in the KG. GWU, MOSLA and MOE and other NGOs are attempting to unify the curricula in the kindergartens under their authority. The absence of clear curricula has an adverse effect on the provision of ECE services in KGs.

- **Academic qualifications:** University graduates working in pre-schools are about 1%, 24% are holders of secondary certificates, 50% of personnel have lower academic background. This level of academic qualification needs upgrading to enable ECE personnel to cope with the requirements of their jobs.

- **Professional Training:** Short-term training courses are organized by different authorities to portions of the personnel. There is a need for nationwide professional training courses covering all the staff of preschool education in the country.

- **Low Salaries:** The low salaries constitute a major constraint in providing ECE services. Highly qualified personnel are not attracted to join preschool education.

- **Buildings:** Children in nurseries and kindergartens are accommodated in rented premises or in special rooms in public departments or clubs. These buildings are not conducive to ECE services. Special buildings need to be established for preschool children.

ECE Services in Tunisia

Basic Data

Population	8.2 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	93
GNP per capita (US$)	1450
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	65
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	56
Children under 6 years	About 1.5 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	6

Background of Preschool Education

Preschool education services are provided for children under 6 in three different kinds of institutions: nurseries (for those who are under 3), kindergartens (for those between 3 and 6), and Koranic schools (for different ages including those under 6 years of age). Below is a brief presentation of their historical background and development in Tunisia.

Nurseries:

There is no law controlling the tasks of nurseries which provide care services to babies, infants and children under three years of age. However, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) issued a memorandum in 1979 specifying the conditions and procedures for the establishment of nurseries, regarding buildings, care-takers and enrollment of children. MOSA requested that one care-taker should be in charge of 5 children who cannot walk, and one caretaker for each eight children who can walk.

In the early 1980s, there were 40 nurseries in the country, half of which were in the capital (Tunis). The others were scattered throughout the provinces. All of them were owned and administered by the private sector. In 1994, the number of nurseries more than doubled, reaching 89 private nurseries and 8 community-based nurseries run by NGOs in Tunisia.

The large number of nurseries in the capital might be attributed to the high percentage of working women compared to other areas and to the increasing number of nuclear families where husband and wife go to work. Caretakers undergo on-the-job training courses, almost annually, for 2 - 3 weeks in subjects such as: educational psychology, psychomotor skills, health and nutrition. These training courses are conducted through collaboration among MOSA, MOE and MOH.

Kindergartens:

There is a legislative ordinance, issued in 1974, which governs KGs in Tunisia in matters pertaining to: buildings, equipment, budget, educational framework, professional training and conditions for children enrollment. The building requirements, if applied, create a climate conducive to healthy development. The budget of KGs comes from tuition fees and donations

from NGOs and different associations. The ordinance qualifies teachers and headteachers of KGs. It qualifies beneficiaries as healthy children between 3 and 6 years. The maximum number of children in one class is not expected to exceed 25.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) is in charge of licensing and supervising training of personnel in KGs. If nurseries are completely private, KGs are a kind of joint venture between the public and the private sectors. Both sectors collaborate in running most of the KGs. Some KGs are run completely by municipalities, ministries and national organizations. Private KGs are usually attached to individuals or to foreign missions.

The numbers of KGs were 178 in 1976 and 332 in 1981. Two thirds of these were public KGs which belonged mainly to municipalities. However, the number of KGs increased a lot in 1994; there were 824 KGs all over the country. They are distributed as follows: 242 public KGs, 392 private KGs and 190 community based KGs run by NGOs. Most of these KGs are in the capital and in the coastal provinces. These figures exclude Koranic preschools which are abundant in the country.

KGs are part of the educational system, female teachers are treated by MOE like primary school teachers. They are recruited for training for two years after completion of secondary education; their age ranges between 18 and 22. Their training includes theoretical background in psychology, preschool education, practical training and demonstration lessons in KGs. Those who succeed in the examinations get a diploma in preschool education.

The curriculum in KGs comprises goals, objectives, activities, teaching methods and assessment procedures. KG goals focus on physical, cognitive, social and affective development of children. The goals deal with the overall development of children. The objectives deal with the development of sensory-motor skills, expression and awakening activities. KG activities intend to develop intelligence and curiosity through play. Teaching methods include trips, projects, puppets, games, use of audiotapes, videotapes, coloured cubes, music and athletics. Moreover, KGs teach their children the basics of the 3 Rs.

Koranic Schools (*Kuttabs*):

Besides nurseries and kindergartens, ECE services are provided to children through Koranic schools which accommodate large numbers of children in all parts of the country, especially in rural areas. These institutions are the oldest among all forms of education. They started to operate immediately after Tunisia embraced Islam. They teach children of different ages (including those who are under 6) the Holy Koran, the principles of Islam and the 3 Rs. The French mandate issued a bylaw to organize the "*Kuttabs*" in 1942. After independence, the "*kuttabs*" were attached to the MOE. In 1980, a decree was issued attaching the *Kuttabs* to the Prime Ministry through a special department. This decree included the conditions for opening a *Kuttab* such as building characteristics, educator qualities, content of instruction, timetable and criteria for children admission.

In the 1960s, there were 800 *Kuttabs*, in the 1980s, their number diminished to 200 after they were attached to the Prime Ministry. When the criteria for licensing were applied, the number decreased further, reaching 160. However, by 1994, the number of *Kuttabs* increased to a non-specified number. The estimated figures currently available indicate the existence of between 500 and 1600 *Kuttabs* covering between 70,000 and 200,000 children of different ages, including preschool age.

Koranic schools provide services in many villages and areas that nurseries and KGs do not reach. They operate in two sessions, three hours each: the first in the morning and the second in the evening. The objectives of *Kuttabs* were adapted to include prerequisite skills to enable the child to join primary education. Methods of teaching were also developed; instead of using memorization only, other techniques are used as well.

Current ECE Services:

Policy: The government does have an overall policy for ECE services. It relates to the general organization of the sector, to the conditions for starting a preschool education institution, to the payment of social security companies of the cost of day-care centres (nurseries or kindergartens) and to the 50% subsidy from the government to the start up cost of kindergartens in municipalities.

Staff: In 1994, preschool education staff numbered 931 teachers in nurseries and kindergartens distributed according to qualifications as follows:

Table 18
Academic Profile of ECE Personnel in Tunisia

Level of Education	%
University Graduates	10
2-Year University	35
Secondary Graduates	35
Less than Secondary	20

The *sheiks* who teach in Koranic schools are estimated to be between 1,000 and 2,000. These Koranic school teachers are generally characterized by good memory, honesty, modesty, good teaching abilities and total dedication to their mission.

Children enrollment: The number of children enrolled in nurseries in 1994 was very limited (1,970 children) compared to those enrolled in kindergartens (54,350 children). These children were distributed among preschool institutions as follows: 18,350 children in public KGs, 29,000 in private KGs and 7,000 children in community-based centres run by NGOs. All these figures constitute 7.5% of the children between 0 - 6 years.

The Koranic schools cover a wide range of age (mainly children between 4 and 10). The estimated figures cover between 70,000 and 200,000 children of different ages, including preschool age, as specified earlier. If the lower figure was estimated to be for children of preschool age, together with those enrolled in nurseries and KGs, the percentage of children receiving preschool education services will increase from 4.5% to 7.5%. If all Koranic school children are added (using the maximum estimated figure of 200,000), the ratio of children receiving services increases by 16%.

Cost: The cost of preschool education is shared among ministries, local authorities (municipalities), NGOs, associations and parents. The government or local authority pays a share in the starting of the institution, then parents pay tuition fees for the services provided to their children. Tuition fees in private KGs range between $120 to $700 per child per annum.

Constraints to ECE Services

One of the main constraints to ECE relates to the fact that the public sector is progressively reducing its involvement in the preschool sector at the service-delivery level, restricting its intervention to training, supervision and provision of subsidies to municipalities and some NGOs.

For the private sector, a number of constraints limit the development of its involvement, particularly:

- The conditions of access are rather limiting due to the tuition fees required to be paid by parents.
- The pricing policy makes kindergartens a rather unprofitable business; this leads to the hiring of unqualified personnel and reduces the quality of the service.
- In general terms, there exists in the country very little experience/information regarding informal ECE approaches and a poor legal/policy framework to contribute to the development of such approaches. Thus, the services are limited mainly to traditional preschool education.
- The quality of ECE services provided for children needs to be adapted to meet current trends in ECE programmes that focus on active learning approaches.
- Data on Koranic schools should be collected regularly and such institutions should be supported, developed and modernized because they reach at risk children in the rural areas of the country.

ECE Services in Turkey

Basic Data

Population	57.2 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	73
GNP per capita (US$)	1640
Urban populations	48.4
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	81
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	71
Children under 6 years	About 9 million
Education expenditure as % GNP	1.8

Preschool Education in Turkey

A standardized widespread system of preschool education does not exist in Turkey. Only about 5.2 percent of Turkish preschool age children attend any sort of preschool institution. The shortage is even more critical for children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds because most of the preschool facilities available (nursery schools, day care centres, nursery classes and child clubs) are privately owned and charge tuition. National resources have been allocated to the primary school system in order to raise literacy levels, leaving government-sponsored preschool services at a rudimentary level. Turkey has been undergoing rapid social change involving massive migration from rural to urban areas. The number of women, including mothers of young children, employed in non-agricultural jobs outside the home has increased rapidly. This has created the demand for institutionalized preschool care and a consequent recent increase in the number of child care centres.

The combination of rapid increase in the number of centres, inadequate supervision and control by government agencies and low expectations of quality from these centres on the part of poorly-educated parents has led to a growing gap between the quality of services available to children of the middle and upper classes and that available to more economically deprived children. Female literacy and education still remain at low levels in Turkey. This has negative consequences for the education of young children and for other aspects of child rearing such as nutrition and health care. Most of these children do not attend any sort of preschool institution, as indicated above, but even among those who do, the majority receive only custodial care in an unstimulating environment. Thus, children who need early environmental enrichment the most attend custodial centres which cannot provide it, a situation commonly seen in Turkey and in other similar societies (Myers, 1983; Bekman, 1982; Ortiz, 1983; Passonsari, 1983; Kagitcibasi, Bekman, Sunar, 1986).

In recent years there has been a growing concern about this situation, and attempts have been made to provide services and materials for preschool education. Thus, in 1978-80 the Turkish Preschool Project was undertaken (Kagitcibasi, 1979; UNESCO, 1981) in cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Education (MOE) to study the state of the early childhood development and education in Turkey, to develop alternative working models for preschool

services and to prepare materials for use in preschool, teacher training and parent education. The materials included source books for use by teachers and parents, such as Child Development, Yearly Program in the Preschool, Preschool Activities, Cognitive Activities, and Your Child and You. These books, published by the MOE have provided valuable source material for preschools and parents, but they have not reached a very large audience. The project also provided the ministry with detailed recommendations and proposals regarding promotion of preschool services, their synchronization with primary school education and teacher training.

ECE in Rural, Urban & Semi Urban Environment[12]

Childhood as a development process is shaped by the social, economic, cultural, physical and environmental conditions within which the child grows up, as well as by the genetically transmitted traits. In this context, three types of environment can be defined within the Turkish society: rural, urban and gecekondu.

Childhood in Rural Environment:

Almost half of the Turkish population live in rural areas, including 60 percent of the under-six population. The responsibility of child rearing is shared by the rural community as a whole, together with the members of the extended family. Traditional practices such as swaddling, earth diapering, not giving water in cases of diarrhoea, not breast feeding the child for the two days following birth etc., are transmitted from one generation to another.

Playing a role model, rather than giving verbal explanations is the mode by which parents relate to their children. Rural children are socialized through a non-verbal culture. In any case, childhood in rural areas is very short. When the children reach the ages of 5-6, they are expected to behave like adults, girls are responsible for tidying up the house, carrying water from the village fountain and taking care of their younger siblings while the boys attend the herds and work in the fields.

Childhood in Urban Environment:

There is no single type of urban family; there is generally an unclear type involved in non-agricultural activities. The father keeps his status as a figure of authority, even though trends towards a more democratic model are now often observed. Childhood today lasts longer in the urban family. Children are expected to carry on with their education to the extent that they and their families desire. Children in their development process have the support of both a richer environment and educated parents. They are not expected to contribute to the family income until they complete their education, including university. If the child has managed to enter the university and is doing well in his studies, then the "pride" felt is regarded as the greatest contribution.

Parents of the urban family, who provide economic security to children, do not expect to be taken care of by their children in their old age and thus, do not attribute any utilitarian values to them, but rather have affection-related motivations. The value of boys and girls seems to be equal among urban families. Even if there are some preferences for boys, it is not reflected

in child-rearing practices. Parental expectations for academic achievement, for example, are almost the same for both the boys and the girls.

The main problem of the urban family is to provide their children with adequate care and education, as the number of working women increases and elder members of the family are no longer nearby. However, lack of day-care facilities means that children are left in the hands of illiterate women of rural origin. Urban families generally live in high-rise buildings without sufficient playgrounds for the children who, with no opportunity for active play where they can spend their energy and improve their psycho-motor development, spend most of their time at home.

Childhood in *Gecekondu* (urban squatter areas):

Over the past 40 years, gecekondu have become one of the most significant social issues in Turkey and even led to a special terminology such as "*gecekondu* family", "*gecekondu* child" and "*gecekondu* culture". The *gecekondu* family is defined as a transitional mode, passing from the rural to the urban family. However, these transition processes have become permanent at some point along the line. Hence, the *gecekondu* family desiring to live like the city folk, is nevertheless reluctant to shed its rural values altogether, particularly those of a social and cultural nature. They generally settle down as a community, with people from the same districts and villages and thus reinforce their values and behavior patterns.

A portion of *gecekondu* children, in order to contribute to the household budget, sell pretzels, newspapers or work in industry or other work places. A sizeable number of these children are trained as apprentices at training centres.

The general tendency among Turkish parents, regardless of rural-urban, peri-urban differentials, is to consider children as means for old-age security. 82 percent of males and 85 percent of females believe in this concept.

ECE Services

Early childhood education is provided under the responsibility of the MOE and the General Directorate of Social Welfare and Child Protection Agency of the Prime Minister's Office (SSCPA). The education of young children between ages 4-5, is provided by the MOE in the institutions for ECE (kindergartens, preparatory classes starting one year before primary school and experimental classes). Other opportunities provided for early childhood education are the private or institutional/work place kindergartens, supervised by the MOE, which supplies these institutions with teachers' guidelines, educational materials and equipment. Children attending these schools are between four and six years of age.

SSCPA is responsible for the care, protection, feeding, education and upbringing of children between ages 0-18 and up to 25 where necessary, as long as they are designated as in need of protection by a judge of court.

Children's homes are established for 0-6 and 7-12 age group children who are in need of protection and training institutions for adolescents of 13 years and older. Furthermore, in various

provinces 30 creches and day-care centres with a total capacity of 3,583 have been established to serve children 0-6, of working parents.

In addition to these facilities, 5,387 children are served by 139 creche and day-care centres belonging to other public organizations and institutions. Private creches and day-care centres number 511 and extend services to 22,126 children between 0 to 6 and 6-12 age groups under permits from the SSCPA. There are considerable differences in the requirements, rules and provisions for operation permits granted to privately-run centres. Since 1983, SSCPA is the responsible body for issuing establishment and operation permits and supervising private creches and day-care centres. (See Table 19).

The MOE takes on the responsibility of 4-6 age group children, and imposes some educational conditions in addition to health requirements. The headteachers and the teachers of those centres have to have a degree in child development and work under license from the SSCPA.

Table 19
Data on ECE Services in Turkey (1988-1989)

Department	Type of Service	# of School classes	# of Students	# of Teachers	Adult/ Child Ratio
MOE	Kindergartens	23	2,403	160	14
	Infant Classes	2,715	85,855	4,765	18
	Preschool Prac. Classes	30	3,583	-	-
PRIME MINISTRY	Creshes & Daycare Centres	262	17,321	-	-
	Creshes & Day-care at Factory	262	17,321	-	-
PRIVATE	MOE	161	5,471	382	14
	SSCPA	362	12,192	-	-

Source: SSCPA (1990)

Current Data on ECE Services in Turkey

Table 20 shows numbers of preschool institutions and children enrollment in private and public sectors.

Table 20

ECE Services by Centre and Children in Turkey (1994)

Service	# of Nurseries (0-3 years)	# of Kindergartens (3-6 years)	# of Children (0-3 years)	# of Children (3-6 years)
Public	4,483	3,905	84,440	128,794
Private	858	822	26,534	200,008
Total	5,341	4,727	110,974	328,802

Percentage of children receiving ECE services provided by both private and public sectors is around 5.2% of the 0-6 age group.

Length of ECE Operation

The length of the ECE programme varies to a great extent. Public services are open for 8-9 months a year for 7-8 hours a day. Private services are available for longer periods throughout the year for 8-9 hours a day.

Content of ECE Programmes

The ECE programmes are diversified to cover information and recreation activities in nurseries and teaching the 3 Rs in kindergartens. Public institutions apply a formal pre-learning approach while private institutions apply the child-centred approach, thus focusing on active learning.

Government Policy

There is no overall government policy for ECE services. Currently, the programmes are scattered among the various departments of Ministries of Education, Social Welfare, Labor, and Health, each dealing with the issue from their own point of view. Recently, with the establishment of the General Directorate of Preschool Education, MOE attempts to expand preschool education activities at a national level.

Daily Activities in a Typical Preschool Programme

The following activities take place in a full day preschool institution. If the service is of a half-day length, children are collected during midday, or they come to the institution in the afternoon and then the morning programme is repeated. Some institutions operate on a double-shift system. The same premises are used to render ECE services for two different groups of children.

Morning Activities

- Free play in activity corners, art and science activities at tables and in related corners, story time, music time, play (in garden)

Midday Activities

- Cleaning and preparation for lunch, lunch, free play in activity corners

Afternoon Activities

- Short nap or rest (1 hour), free play in corners, art and science, music, play

ECE Government Expenditure

As the ECE services are scattered and budget breakdowns do not give such details, it is not easy to estimate the government expenditure for children between 0-6 years. Children receiving ECE services have to pay tuition fees. The allocated expenditure, in 1993, for the education subsector in Turkey is around 1.8% of GNP.

Cost:

The cost for ECE services varies according to the services, i.e., half day, full day, private, public etc. At private institutions, for example, the tuition fees per child per year is around $1,000, compared to $200 at public institutions. Limited numbers of families can afford to pay such tuition fees, thus depriving their children of ECE services.

Main Constraints to ECE:

- Institutional and professional ECE approach, requiring high cost services run by university trained personnel of "well structured" centres, cannot reach those children who need ECE experiences most.
- The centralized administrative system of the country does not permit the conceptualization and implementation of ECE services which requires more non-formal approach involving para-professionals, parents and community as a whole.
- Economic constraints affect expansion of existing ECE services to those who are most needy, i.e., for the children at risk.
- The low educational level of mothers, especially in rural and squatter areas, prevents children from benefitting from ECE services.
- Lack of basic child development and education knowledge and skills among parents and other adults responsible for child care.

- Widespread traditional child care practices, some of which have damaging effects on the child health and development among low education level families.

- Rapidly rising number of working mothers and insufficient number of day-care facilities and preschool institutions to accommodate children under 6.

ECE Services in The United Arab Emirates

Basic Data

Population	1.6 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	67
GNP per capita (US$)	19870
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	48
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	38
Children under 6 years	300,000
Education Expenditure as % of GNP	1.9

Background of Preschool Education

Education in the UAE started at the turn of the century with the development of Koranic schools (*Al-Matawha*, in Arabic). Children joined the schools to learn reading and writing over and above memorizing the Holy Koran. Financed by wealthy merchants, these schools opened and closed according to the financial status of the merchant. There were never more than four such schools in operation at the same time. These religious schools were the only institutions to provide literacy services until the middle of the century when Arab countries assisted the U.A.E. in establishing a formal education system until independence in 1971.

Preschool education in the UAE is free but not compulsory in public kindergartens for children between 4 and 6. Admission at the KG level, unlike all other levels is restricted to UAE nationals only. However, there are private KGs all over the country to accommodate children of other nationalities whose parents work in the UAE.

The first public kindergarten started in Abu Dhabi in 1968. Despite its short history, kindergartens have spread nationwide. Table 21 shows the development of KGs between 1972 and 1993 with respect to institutions, classes, children and teachers.

Table 21

Development of Public Kindergartens in UAE (1972 - 1993)

Year	# of KGs	# of Classes	# of Children	# of Teachers & Headmistresses
1972/1973	11	93	3,276	312
1989/1990	42	598	16,428	1,024
1992/1993	55	-	17,676	1,221

The number of children enrolled in public KGs (4 - 6 years old) is roughly estimated to be 10% of the eligible target group of the total population. The percentage rises to around 35% if private preschool education figures are added to those of public KGs.

Both private and public KGs are co-educational, although only women can be teachers. The number of male children and female children is almost the same.

Academic qualifications of most teachers and headmistresses are low. Table 22 shows the status of teachers, assistant headmistresses and headmistresses according to qualifications and nationality in 1988/1989. Only 22.2 percent of all teachers, assistant headmistresses and headmistresses hold a first university degree and none was specialized in preschool education at the time. The rest held either secondary school certificates or were at the time graduates of teacher education centres with two-year post-secondary study programme. However, with the influx of female graduates in preschool education in specialization from UAE university from 1988 to 1994, the percentage of university graduates increased among teachers, assistant headmistresses and headmistresses.

In 1994, more than 90% of the teaching force in the 55 public KGs were female UAE nationals. The remaining 10% were females of Arab origin who taught art education, physical education or music. This is due to the fact that teachers with such specializations are not available among female UAE nationals.

Table 22

Kindergarten Teachers and Headmistresses According to Qualifications and Nationality in UAE (1988/1989)

Item		Secondary	2-Yr Post-Secondary	B.A. Degree	Total
Teachers	UAE Nationals	356	3	54	413
	Expatriates (Arabs)	33	255	63	351
Headmistresses & Assistants	UAE Nationals	67	19	85	171
	Expatriates (Arabs)	6	7	11	24
Total		462	284	213	959

At present, all the administrators (headmistresses and assistant headmistresses) are female UAE nationals in public preschool institutions. There is a plan by MOE and UAE university to restrict public preschool education completely to UAE nationals (i.e. administration, teaching force and children).

Preschool Curriculum

The KG curriculum is a core curriculum. It consists of certain units from which teaching/learning activities in different areas are introduced. The present KG curriculum consists of ten main units covering the two-year study programme for KG I (4 - 5 year children) and KG II (5 - 6 year children). The teaching/learning units for the first year are: (1) My KG, (2) The

Family, (3) The Desert, (4) Myself and Others and (5) The Zoo. The units for the second year are (1) The Sea, (2) Professions (occupations), (3) The Fruit and Vegetable Market, (4) Animals and (5) Transportation. The content of each unit is taken from the local environment. A teacher's handbook tells KG teachers how to teach each unit and what knowledge needs to be transmitted. It also tells them about the techniques and methods to be applied. Teaching/learning activities for each unit revolve around Islamic education, Arabic language, mathematics, science, art, music and body movement. The approach in the teaching/learning process is not formal, it is child-centred. Field trips, play, pictures, drawing, singing, etc... are the techniques used to enrich children's knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Current Status of Preschool Education

As the expatriates working in UAE form the majority of the population, there is need for large numbers of institutions to provide services for their children, including those of preschool education. In 1993, there were 173 private nurseries and kindergartens and 228 community-based preschool centres run by NGOs, associations, expatriates and foreign missions. These institutions provided ECE services to expatriates and UAE children all over the country, especially in the urban areas. Table 23 shows ECE services in the country in 1992/1993. The number of children from zero to six benefitting from ECE services provided by different kinds of nurseries and kindergartens was 103,770. This amounts to almost 35% of the target group (children under 6). This percentage is the highest in the MENA region countries. What contributes to this high percentage is that the ECE input is provided by MOE, the private sector, community-based institutions and the expatriate working force. It is also worth noting, that more than 87% of preschool children are enrolled in KGs while 13% only go to nurseries.

Table 23
ECE Institutions, Teachers and Children in UAE (1992/1993)

Item	Public Institutions	Private Institutions	Community Based Inst.	Total
KGs (3-6 yrs)	55	173	228	456
Teachers	1221	1611	2832	5664
# of Children in nurseries (0-3 yrs)	1306	5301	6607	13214
# of Children in KGs (3-6 yrs)	16370	28908	45278	90556
Total # of Preschool Children	17676	35209	51885	103770

Length of ECE Operations

Children in preschool centres start at 8 am and finish at 12 noon (i e 4 hours daily for 6 days a week for a period of nine months). The total number of hours is around 1000 per annum. Each day consists of six periods, one is for a meal at 10 am followed by half an hour break. Each period lasts for half an hour. The weekly timetable includes two periods for sports, two for drawing, two for music and one for free activities. Each of these subjects is taught by a special teacher. The rest of the periods during the week are spent on the instructional units of the curriculum, implemented by the classroom teacher.

Constraints to ECE Services

- **Training:** MOE needs to upgrade the level of the UAE female teachers who were employed in the 1980s with only secondary school education. Moreover, MOE needs to promote training to the private sector in order to exchange experience with the expatriate staff involved in ECE services.

- **Supervisory Staff:** Preschool supervisory staff at MOE need to be enriched with highly qualified personnel who can improve ECE services not only in the limited number of public KGs, but extend their expertise to private and community-based preschool centres all over the country.

- **KG Training Centre:** A pioneering project for KG training was established by MOE, in Dubai, in 1993 to provide training services nationwide. This is an extension to a UNESCO/AGFUND project on the "Development of Early Childhood Care and Education" in Saudi Arabia. However, the centre personnel require to develop their skills through advanced on-the-job courses for trainers, benefiting from regional and international experiences in ECE services.

- **Parent Education:** The high percentage of illiteracy, especially among women (62%), draws attention to the significance of organizing parent education courses to enable them to contribute to the development of their children. UAE enjoys the highest GNP per capita in the MENA region, it is expected, therefore, that ECE services be expanded to more than the present percentage of 35%.

ECE Services in Yemen

Basic Data

Population	12.1 million
HDI rank (among 173 countries and areas)	143
GNP per capita (US$)	650
Adult literacy rate (%15+)	39
Adult female literacy rate (%15+)	26
Children under 6 years	Less than 3 million

Background of Preschool Education

Preschool education in Yemen is generally viewed as less important than education at later stages. Its "inferior" status has retarded the development of preschools in the country. Preschool services in Yemen are provided mainly by kindergartens, with a very limited number of nurseries. The nurseries that exist are allocated mainly in one or two rooms in KGs in order to provide children under 3 years with care.

According to the Private Education Decree of 1981, there are three types of KGs in the country. Public KGs are established by the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) and Ministry of Education (MOE). Private KGs are established by NGOs or members of the local community. Foreign private KGs are established by foreign missions, embassies or expatriates. Preschool education services began in the 1970s through private enterprises. In the 1980s, more KGs were started in urban areas. There are almost no preschool education services in the rural areas which are inhabited by 80% of the country's population. In 1990, MOE identified the main goals of preschool education, focussing on morals, values, independence, well-developed personality, basic skills, etc.[1]

In 1990, there were only 27 KGs, both public and private in Yemen. It is necessary to get the approval of both MOE and MOSA to establish preschool institutions. MOSA carries out the actual supervision on both types of KGs. The number of children involved in preschool education in 1990 was 3,000 only. This number is not constant because of absence, sickness and dropout of children.

The number of preschool education institutions is expanding in the 1990s in response to actual demand, especially from families with working mothers in urban areas. A government survey showed that 51 preschool institutions operated in Yemen in 1991 providing services for 10,067 children aged 2 - 6 years. The sex difference among children attending preschools is lower than that in the basic education stage (5,319 male and 4,748 female KG children in 1991). This might be attributed to the fact that most preschools are in urban areas where parents are better educated and mothers work outside their homes.

Most preschool centres are privately owned and operated, and staffed largely by expatriates. Though the establishment is licensed by the MOE and MOSA, these ministries do

not enforce any standards related to curricula, staff or building facilities. Therefore, the quality of service is generally poor. While a few number of preschools offer good quality services, others essentially perform the functions of baby-sitters. A recent government survey found that most preschools are urgently in need of improved curricula, staff training, child development methods, guidance, educational materials and reinforcing quality of ECE services provided for children.

Current Status of Preschool Education:

Institutions and Children

In 1994, there were only 17 nurseries in Yemen (8 public and 9 private) providing services to 439 children from birth to three years of age (200 children & 239, respectively). Moreover, there were 82 kindergartens in the country (45 public and 37 private) providing services to 11,404 children between three and six years (8,490 children and 2,914 children respectively). The total preschool enrollment (11843 children) constitutes less than 1% of the target group i.e. children under 6 in the whole country.

Curriculum and Methodology

There is no prescribed or unified curriculum for preschool education in Yemen. The methodology applied in provision of ECE services varies from one institution to another depending on the KG administrators and/or care-givers working in these institutions. Most of these KGs follow curricula applied in Jordanian or Lebanese KGs. Foreign KGs apply foreign curricula, English is mainly the medium of instruction.

Public and private KGs provide children with services for 5 hours daily, incorporating activities such as music, songs, play, educational games, language exercises, religious education and sciences. Alphabet learning, letter and number naming and writing are taught through teaching aids, i.e. through drawing, coloring and painting.

Qualifications of Preschool Personnel:

Based on data from the Department of Women and Children in the MOSA in 1991, the qualifications of preschool personnel indicate that two-thirds of them have secondary school education or less as shown here:

13% holders of primary school certificates
15% holders of preparatory school certificates
38% holders of secondary school certificates
34% holders of university degrees

Among these teachers, only 35% benefitted from the training organized by the MOSA before they were assigned to their work. However, most of those who were trained are no longer working in preschool education.

In 1994, the profile looks different; it is as follows:

2% holders of diplomas (2-year university)
68% holders of secondary school education
30% less than secondary

The new profile indicates that the present staff comprises no university degree holders and that the secondary school graduate teachers constitute more than two thirds of the present personnel. Teachers who have less than secondary education increased from 28% (in 1991) to 30% (in 1994).

Cost of Preschool Education

There are no free preschool services in Yemen. All types of KGs are fee-charging institutions. Parents pay tuition fees for their children. The average cost paid by parents per child per annum is roughly $120. This fee limits the beneficiaries to the urban wealthy community, i.e. to the high income population. Some KGs are subsidized by grants received from the government, NGOs or international agencies.

Major Constraints to ECE Services

- **Government Input:** There is no government policy for ECE in the country. There is no budget for preschool education, neither in the MOE nor in the MOSA. No unified syllabus or curriculum is prepared for use in the country.

- **Teacher Training:** Preschool education personnel are not qualified for the job. There are disparities among them in the inputs they exercise in providing the services due to lack of professional training.

- **Coverage:** The present services are limited to less than 1% of the target population (children under 6) in the country. No preschool service is provided to the most needy and at risk children in the rural areas which are dispersed and scattered in more than 11,000 locations.

- **Buildings:** Buildings are not sufficient, preschool services are located in attachments to other primary institutions in many cases. Children are crowded in large numbers in classrooms with limited facilities.

- **Salaries:** Preschool personnel get low salaries. This leads to high dropout among them. Poor salaries do not attract high calibre personnel. The small number of among university graduates, who leave preschool education for other jobs whenever opportunities arise, is probably attributed to low salaries and to the feeling of insecurity in their career.

- **Quality:** The quality of ECE services provided for children is a major problem in preschool institutions in Yemen. They lack interesting teaching methods, child-centred learning activities and audio-visual aids. Poor quality of service and crowded classes

lead to dropouts and long absences from preschool institutions.

- **Parent Education:** Having high rates of illiteracy among adults (61%), and especially among female adults (74%), and having very limited ECE coverage (less than 1%), such issues require intervention at the family level through parent education programmes. The challenge that confronts the country is how and under what circumstances quality services can be implemented and sustained. Such programmes should attempt to offer quality education for parents and consider them to be the main ECD and ECE service providers for their children.

III. FINDINGS ON ECE AND MENA COST ESTIMATES

Introduction

In response to the questionnaire on the status of ECD in MENA region, 18 MENA countries responded and provided relevant data on ECE in various countries. Discussions were conducted with two ECD international leaders working in the Consultative Group on ECCD concerning the critical issues of this comprehensive review. The findings incorporated in the first part of the chapter are based on data collected from the responses received on the questionnaire and from several other UN and local sources.

The second part partially tackles the unit cost estimates due to non-availability of data. Neither UNICEF's MENA countries' responses nor the feedback from national governments were received. The most basic question is not whether costs are high or low, but whether they are high or low in relation to the desired outcome. Lacking a direct comparison at current national levels of expenditure required to provide education to all at-risk children, the educational planner or policy maker who wishes to be guided by economic criteria is left to make a personal interpretation of whether the learning outcome outweighs the cost or not.

Findings on ECE

These findings provide an overview of ECE institutions, teachers, enrolled children, teacher qualifications, training of personnel, curricula, buildings and equipment, supervision and quality of service, Koranic schools, government policy and the major constraints to ECE in the MENA region.

ECE Institutions, Teachers and Children

The country-by-country statistical summary, in Table 24, presents MENA countries' population, GNP per capita, educational expenditure as percentage of GNP, being valuable data on the profile of each country, number of preschool institutions, teachers and children benefiting from ECE services. The institutions cover nurseries, kindergartens and community-based centres. Teachers and children in these pre-school institutions are added and teacher/pupil ratios are calculated. The percentage of children in the same age-group (0-6 years) benefiting from ECE services was calculated as an indicator for coverage of these intervention programmes. Some percentages were taken from the respondents to the questionnaire, others were calculated in view of the data available in the 'Statistical Chart on Children: ECD & Learning Achievement' published by the United Nations in 1990.

Table 24, in the last column, shows disparities between percentages of beneficiaries

within the target age group (0-6 years). The highest percentages were in UAE (35%), Lebanon (21%), Jordan, Algeria and Palestine (20%). The lowest percentages were in Djibouti (0.3%), Yemen (1%), Iran, Libya and Morocco (each 2%). The coverage of ECE services in the MENA region is around 3.3% which is very low compared to ECE coverage in the other regions.

Table 24

Country Profiles, ECE Institutions, Teachers & Children in MENA

Country	Year	Population (millions)	US$ GNP per capita	Adult/ child ratio	% of ECE children in the age group (0-6)
Algeria	1994	25.6	2,330	13	20
Bahrain	1992	0.5	6,830	19	12
Djibouti	1994	0.5	2,220	47	0.3
Egypt	1993	53.6	610	16	7
Iran	1993	59.1	2,490	14	2
Iraq	1994	18.7	10,370	17	3
Jordan	1993	4.1	1,340	22	20
Lebanon	1993	2.8	1,730	25	21
Libya	1994	4.7	NA	13	2
Morocco	1991	25.7	970	11	2
Oman	1993	1.6	5,650	10	6.6
Palestine (WB & GS)	1992	1.9	WB 1,688 GS 643	NA	20
Sudan	1993	25.7	400	34	6
Syria	1994	12.8	1,000	25	10
Tunisia	1994	8.2	1,450	25	7.5
Turkey	1993	57.2	1,640	NA	5.2
UAE	1993	1.6	19,870	22	35
Yemen	1987	12.8	540	22	1

Teacher Academic and Professional Qualifications

Table 25 presents the academic profile of the ECE teaching staff in ten MENA countries. The academic qualifications of ECE staff is generally poor. University graduates are non-existent in three countries (Iraq, Libya and Yemen); in Syria they make up only 1%.

Most of the staff are secondary school graduates or have primary or preparatory school education.

It was reported, in response to the questionnaire, that most preschool staff take their job without being professionally trained. No regular on-the-job training programmes are organized for them.. Short courses are organized irregularly by MOE, MOSLA, and sometimes by international organizations and NGOs.

Table 25
Academic Profile of ECE Teachers in MENA (1994)

Country	University Graduate		2 Year University		Secondary Graduate		Below Secondary	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Bahrain	50	10	75	15	15	3	357	72
Iraq	-	-	938	15	5318	85	-	-
Jordan	219	11	1533	77	199	10	40	2
Lebanon	477	9	1378	26	424	8	3021	57
Libya	-	-	-	-	946	80	236	20
Morocco	225	6	-	-	1050	28	2475	66
Oman	68	29	50	21	118	50	-	-
Syria	45	1	-	-	1087	24	3396	75
Tunisia	1025	10	3589	35	3589	35	2050	20
Yemen	-	-	20	2	676	68	298	30

Training of ECE Personnel

The training of ECE personnel in MENA needs development and improvement. Even though a number of ministries, NGOs and international organizations offer ad hoc short training courses, training emphasizes theory rather than skills and practice. Also, a large number of untrained ECE personnel in rural areas does not benefit from on-the-job training.courses. These preschool teachers, child-care workers or Koranic school teachers need to be trained to do the job properly because they represent the most direct and important elements of interaction of the child with the broader institutional environment since they are part of the solid institutions that touch the child's life.

Curricula and Programmes of ECE

There is no single ECE curriculum or programme in any of MENA countries. Rather, there are several curricula and programmes in each country in public, private or community-based centres.

As a rule, preschool nurseries and kindergartens organize teaching/learning activities for children based on general guidelines or goals specified by MOEs, MOSLAs, NGOs or administrators of the institutions. Curricula include activities like painting, art, story telling and role playing in most nurseries; numeric, pre-reading and pre-writing activities are added in KGs. There are wide disparities between public and private ECE curricula and programmes. Disparities are also clear within the institutions of each sector, whether public, private or community-based.

ECE Buildings and Equipment

Reports on ECE buildings in MENA countries indicate that norms and standards vary from one country to another, depending on the goals of the institution and its location, climate of the country, availability of funding, the opening hours, age of children, etc. Within the same country, norms and standards appear to be different between public, private and community-based institutions. Most public institutions are either extensions attached to primary schools or are located in rented buildings which were not intended to be used as educational institutions. Private profit-making centres attempt to occupy premises conducive to provision of quality services, while non-profit private centres are content with buildings offered to them by NGOs and/or the local community.

The equipment in ECE institutions in MENA countries comprises mainly playing materials (sand & water), art work (clay, dough, plasticine, paints and cloth), toys, dolls, climbing frames, gardening tools, handicraft tools, etc. Some institutions have audio-visual media and musical instruments. Some MENA countries have concrete legislative acts, ordinances or regulations issued to specify criteria of ECE buildings and equipment as prerequisites for licensing, others do not have such requirements.

ECE Supervision and Quality of Service

One of the ECE programmes's weak points in MENA countries is supervision. A number of ministries do not consider the supervision of pre-primary institutions as their main task, and the supervision that is carried out is not systematic. MOSLAs consider the educational component as the responsibility of MOEs. MOEs consider preschool centres as being 'outside' the public education system. There is wide disparity in the quality of services provided by the different types of ECE programmes in MENA. This is partly due to the variations in training of care-givers and teachers, in government funding, in equipment, in supplies, and in facilities. Quality of service in ECE institutions is affected, also, by the teacher/child ratio. A caregiver or teacher of whatever, will not be able to cope with large numbers of children in one classroom, as the situation is in Djibouti (ratio 1:47) and Sudan (ratio 1:34).

Koranic Schools

Koranic schools (named as *Khalwas* in Sudan and *Kuttabs* in North Africa and other Arab countries) spread in most MENA countries when they adopted Islam. These schools provide basics of Islamic education and teach the 3 Rs; thus, they have been playing a role in the eradication of illiteracy for ages. In Sudan and Tunisia, for example, Koranic schools are part of the education system and they reach remote villages and rural areas.

These schools provide ECE services for preschool children; thus, they constitute a common denominator between many MENA countries. For all their diversity, they pursue a single aim and are intimately linked with the local communities in which they exist. Those schools have great potential for the development of basic education in general and the promotion of preschool education in particular.

Government Policy on ECE

Data received from countries through UNICEF's MENA offices indicates that eight countries have policies for ECE and 10 do not. The ones having ECE policies are Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia and UAE. These policies are issued either by the central government, MOE, MOSLA or MOY.

Major Constraints to ECE in MENA

The major constraints to ECE services, as expressed by respondents, are the following:

- **Coverage:** ECE services are mostly offered in urban areas and to those who can afford to pay tuition fees for their children, especially in private institutions. Compared to coverage of similar services in other regions, the percentage of children under 6 receiving ECE services is low (3.3% only).

- **Training:** Almost all ECE staff need different types of training programmes to professionally qualify them for the job. Most countries expressed their need for on-the-job training courses in ECE approaches, active learning methods and techniques.

- **Quality:** The quality of ECE services, on the whole, is poor. There is room for qualitative improvement in all types of ECE institutions, public, private or community-based. Quality services apply active learning techniques, multi-faceted comprehensive strategies, begin where children are, seek cost effectiveness and focus on children at risk.

- **Cost:** A great number of children are not provided with ECE services because their parents cannot afford to meet the expenses. To seek more coverage, governments, NGOs, international bodies and local communities are expected to contribute to providing low-cost ECE services to preschool children and their parents.

- **Children at Risk:** Outreaching ECE projects need to implement activities in

MENA countries so as to offer the best prospects of reaching the children who are "at risk" with effective services. Most ECE services are provided on a fairly limited scale. Probably the Koranic schools represent the model, in several MENA countries, which reaches the unreached children in rural and remote areas. Mass media can also play an effective role in reaching children and their parents.

Unit Cost Estimates

Responses to the Questionnaire

To carry out a unit cost estimate of existing ECE interventions and from this attempt to make an estimate of current national levels of expenditure required to provide this level of education to all at risk children, two questions were addressed to national governments, through UNICEF's MENA 21 offices, namely:

(i) Government expenditure for ECE programmes (in US$) in 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1994;

(ii) What is the cost per child per year (in $US)?
   a. How much do parents pay per year?
   b. How much does the government contribute per year?

Two respondents only answered the first question, i.e. Syria and Tunisia which indicated that the 1994 expenditures allocated for ECE were 50 million Syrian pounds (equivalent to US$ 1,879,699) and 6 million Tunisian pounds (equivalent to US$ 5,736,000).

To estimate the cost per unit per child per year, the estimated total yearly cost allocated by the government to ECE services was divided into the number of children who benefitted from the programmes. In Syria, the cost per child per year (1994) was $17.00 approximately, while in Tunisia the cost per child per year was $22, (i.e. 1,879,699/115191 = 17 & 5,736,000/256,328 = 22).

Putting Cost Estimates in Perspective

Calculating the actual cost of programmes is one thing and judging whether these costs are high or low, affordable or not, is another thing. It is advisable to relate cost estimates to the particular economic context in which they are incurred; costs are sometimes compared to: household income, the level of a minimum wage or the per capita GNP. If the last indicator is applied for Syria and Tunisia, i.e. dividing the per capita GNP into the cost per child per year, the ratio will be 1:59 (i.e. 1000/17) and 1:66 (i.e. 1450/22) respectively. Also, if a programme cost per child is higher than a minimum salary, for instance, it will obviously not be a programme the poor can afford on their own. In the case of Syria and Tunisia, the ECE programmes seem to be affordable.

By comparing the unit cost estimates in Syria and Tunisia to the tuition fees paid by parents in private preschools in the MENA region (see Table 26), one can deduce that private ECE programmes are high cost while government services are low cost. However, if the

cost is so prohibitive that it restricts ECE programmes to only a few privileged individuals, it will not allow application on a large scale and may have to be discarded as unfeasible, even though it is cost effective. Therefore, if MENA countries want to make the best use of resources, it is critical to seek options that are relatively low in cost and high in effectiveness.

It is worth noting, however, that against different backgrounds, direct comparisons should not be made among programmes that have different goals and use different methods.[14]

Funding

No government expenditure is earmarked for ECE programmes in most MENA countries. Allocations are made for preschool services, as part of the basic education in most public institutions, from the MOE or MOSLA's budget. However, the case is different in the private (profit-making) sector. ECE institutions charge tuition fees that vary according to the quality and duration of services provided for children. In response to the question on the cost per child per year, no responses were received on the governments' share in community-based centres and in private institutions. Nine responses were received specifying tuition fees paid by parents per child per year in nine MENA countries. The following list presents the disparities among the costs incurred by parents who opt to provide their children with quality private ECE services:

Table 26
Tuition Fees in Private Preschools in MENA (1994)

Country	Tuition Fees (US$) per Annum
Bahrain	400 - 2000
Djibouti	1000
Iraq	500
Jordan	100 - 1500
Lebanon	0 - 2000
Libya	150
Oman	780
Syria	158
Tunisia	120 - 700

Cost is always the price for having something. The desired ECE services which parents choose can be more or less ambitious, more or less comprehensive. The choice of a private ECE institution by parents who can afford to pay affects services and the cost. It does not make sense, then, given programme differences in goals and methods, to simply compare the per person cost of an ECE programme with the per person cost of another.

IV. Critical Issues and Recommendations

Introduction

Based on a review of the country profiles in Chapter II and on the findings of Chapter III, this chapter deals with major critical issues needing priority attention and feasible recommendations addressing them in MENA.

Twelve critical issues are included because they are basic in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating ECE programmes. Each critical issue is immediately followed by the relevant, feasible recommendation. Critical issues needing priority attention are the following: national policy, educational system, human resources development, parent/community involvement, joint funding, use of limited resources, equal opportunity, ECE institutions, Koranic schools, adult/child ratio, curriculum and active learning methodology.

National ECE Policy

Issue:

National policies on ECE in MENA countries are based mainly on the idea of non-interference in affairs relating to the care and education of young children. Specific government policies in MENA generally target families and children at risk because of economic or social circumstances. Even though many MENA countries leave ECE completely to the private sector, several MENA countries have concrete policies for the development of ECE services at the national level. Other countries have no policy for early childhood education and development.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that each MENA country - which does not have a national ECE policy - be encouraged to introduce such a policy through the promulgation of legislation (in the form of laws, acts, decrees, etc.), together with corresponding regulations, directives or guidelines, to ensure the implementation of the policy and the setting of targets, and to quantify and qualify the policy aims.

ECE Part of the Educational System

Issue:

Making preschool education institutions part of the national educational system in MENA countries will avail more financial allocation for it, expand coverage to rural areas and improve the ECE services qualitatively and quantitatively. Such transformation will bring about a form of integration, in early childhood, of a primary education programme which would serve as a vehicle for linking family and community interests and strengths with

the formal school system.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that MENA countries make preschool education part of the educational system. Such a step will provide ECE with financial and professional support from MOEs, thus leading to the provision of quality services and reaching children at risk.

Human Resources Development

Issue:

Human resources development (HRD) in the MENA region will enable individuals working in ECE to invest themselves fully in their work, thereby enriching it. HRD might take the form of workshops, seminars, conferences that bring together national and international parties to discuss ECE services and to formulate guidelines and targets for future action. HRD programmes contribute to empowering ECE staff with professional skills and competence.

Recommendation:

Systematic HRD programmes need to be organized in each MENA country to strengthen the ability of individuals who touch the child's life: preschool teacher, child-care workers, caregivers, Koranic school teachers and parents. HRD programmes would be in the form of on-the-job training courses, seminars or workshops, to meet the needs of those who are involved in providing ECE services.

Parent/Community Involvement in ECE Programmes

Issue:

The general consensus in the MENA region is that the greater the level of parent/community involvement, the more likely it is that the ECE services will meet parent/community needs and become an integrated part of community life. Parents in MENA are policy makers in most areas of their children's lives. Their involvement in the design and operation of ECE institutions increases the likelihood of continuity of experience between home and preschool for the child. Parent/community involvement and support offer promising strategies for facilitating the ECE programmes.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that parents and local community leaders participate in the process of developing ECE services in MENA. ECE programmes must be designed in collaboration with parents as partners in order to assure sustainability. Educators and policy makers have to find ways to alter ECE programmes to promote parent/community contribution to early education and development of children.

Promoting Joint Funding for ECE Programmes

Issue:

Sponsors of ECE intervention programmes in MENA include four groups: (i) government ministries, (ii) NGOs at both the national and international levels, (iii) international donor organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank and USAID, and (iv) the local communities. Some of these groups might be involved in monitoring the provision of ECE services.

Recommendation:

As most MENA governments are unable to take on sole responsibility for the provision of ECE services, it is recommended that they formulate partnerships with donors, and develop models of collaboration between government, NGOs and international agencies, building on what they can provide.

Effective Use of Limited Resources in ECE

Issue:

Limited human and financial resources available for ECE programmes in MENA have adverse effects on coverage of such programmes. The demands for funding do not go hand in hand with training needs, resource production and expansion of activities. Present ECE funding is from international and regional donors and from local sources. Local ECE institutions base their fund-raising on individual efforts (tuition-fees) and in isolation from one another.

Recommendation:

To compensate for the shortage of funds and human resources in MENA countries, it is recommended that the limited resources allocated for ECE be made use of efficiently and cost-effectively.

Equal Opportunity in Preschool Education

Issue:

The profiles of ECE in 18 MENA countries gave evidence that there is inequality and disparity in educational opportunity in preschool education. There are also vast differences in the quality of services provided for children by private as compared to public institutions. National governments have invested more in urban areas, with children of best opportunities, neglecting at- risk children in rural areas.

Recommendation:

In widely different situations in MENA, it is recommended that "maximum

opportunities for a maximum of children" be offered. Measures need to be taken to address the inequality in ECE degree of staffing and supervision, in funding, facilities and staff training.

ECE Institutions: Motivating and Accommodating Places

Issue:

ECE services are provided in the MENA region either in rented buildings, built in poor locations, or occupy annexes to primary schools. Classrooms accommodate large numbers of children. Teachers are unable to stimulate children in an environment which is not motivating.. Institutions are not appropriate places for children's active learning..

Recommendation:

Some MENA countries have rules and regulations governing the criteria for the building facilities before issuing licensing to an ECE institution. Others do not have any regulation. It is recommended, therefore, that the first group enact the regulation of making ECE institutions attractive, stimulating and accommodating places, and the second group work on issuing such legislation.

Development of Koranic Schools

Issue:

Koranic schools in many MENA countries provide low-cost attention to the process of socialization of children. These schools hasten the universalization of basic education for both young and old at a modest cost, appropriate to the economic situation in most MENA countries. Modernization and development of Koranic schools does not intend to detract them from their spiritual standing or their original educational role. On the contrary, the aim is to enable them to respond to present-day needs and to be guided by their model in rationalizing expenditure and transmitting values and experience from one generation to the next.

Recommendation:

It is recommended to provide Koranic schools in the MENA region with the necessary human and technical resources to develop and modernize their institutions in view of the present-day circumstances. Koranic schools need to be strengthened to enable them to respond to the spiritual and material needs of the society in which they are rooted and in reaching children at risk in rural and remote areas.

Adult/Child Ratio: Advocating Small Group Sizes

Issue:

The adult/child ratio in MENA nurseries and kindergartens is higher than the international norm. A caregiver will not be able to take care of more than five children under 2 years, or not more than 10 children between 2-4 years in a nursery group. However, she might be able to deal with 15 or 20 children between 4-6 years. The task will be more difficult if the caregiver/teacher is not professionally qualified as the case is in MENA countries.

The adult/child ratio is so high (1:40 or 1:50) in some countries, especially in Koranic schools, that it will have adverse effect on the quality of provision of services.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that adult/child ratio be reduced as much as possible. Small-size groups encourage interaction and create a climate for active learning and overall development.

Developing Preschool Curriculum in MENA

Issue:

The preschool curricula are so different within MENA countries - and within each country - that common denominators comprising key content experiences and elements are needed as general guidelines for policy makers and ECE educational planners. The key content experiences might be organized in nine categories: social and emotional, development, language, representation, classification, seriation number, spatial relation, time, and movement. The principal elements might be made up of the following five ingredients: materials for each child, manipulation of those materials by the child, choice by the child of what to do with the materials, language chosen and used by the child and support by adults and peers.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that preschools in MENA adopt the 'Active Learning' approach based on the fundamental premise of the curriculum that children are active learners who learn best from activities they plan and carry out themselves. As all MENA countries - except for Djibouti, Iran and Turkey - share the same language, any ECE curricular units prepared in Arabic might be made use of in all Arabic speaking countries of the MENA region.

Developing Active Learning Methodology in ECE

Issue:

ECE programmes in MENA should adopt an active learning methodology by creating the environment in which young children explore actively with all senses, discover relations through direct experience, manipulate, transform and combine materials, use their large muscles, take care of their own needs, choose materials and activities and acquire skills with tools and equipment.

Recommendation:

ECE caregivers, teachers, headteachers, and supervisors must be trained to implement active learning approaches in preschool institutions. Active learning - the direct and immediate experiencing of objects, people or events - is a necessary condition for cognitive restructuring and hence for development. High//Scope Foundation might be a useful resource in active learning techniques.

A Call for Joint Action

Myers contrasts the State of the Art (what is feasible) with the State of Practice (what is mainly happening) and in this way offers options for programme development and research initiatives, which, being critical issues, need priority attention.

The care and education of young children in MENA region should not be an isolated effort directed at children alone through ECE services. Extended families make a valuable contribution in providing ECE services for young children, particularly in rural areas. Such families should be supported as well. A 'sick' community, not unlike sick parents, cannot care for its children. This support calls not only for vast financial and human input but also for concerted action on the part of the grassroots groups, NGOs, research institutions, donors, and governments.

V. Indicators For Monitoring and Evaluating ECE Services in MENA

Introduction

This chapter tackles the main indicators for monitoring and evaluating ECE services, which is a major component of ECD, in the MENA region. The 16 indicators proposed in this review are not comprehensive; however, they are classified, according to the approach: input indicators (1-9), process indicators (10-13) and output indicators (14-16). Standard measures of indicators may be appropriate for some activities and for some ECE programmes that are comparable in content. However, many ECE interventions will not be comparable because they differ in context, content and participants.

These sets of easy to use indicators might be used by educational planners and policy makers for monitoring and evaluating ECE services regionally. These educational leaders will benefit from the feedback collected on the indicators by proposing specific intervention programmes and by taking measures that may be necessary to promote ECE services.

The operational definitions of each of the three terms are specified here for the readers, educational planners and policy makers.

Indicators are objective and specific measures of changes or results expected from an activity. They are designed to provide a scale against which to measure and show the activity's progress towards producing its output and achieving its objectives. They can also be stated as specific targets to be achieved at specific points in time during the implementation of the activity or they can be categorized by type, such as output indicators or impact indicators.

Monitoring is the continuous oversight of the implementation of an activity. It seeks to ensure that input deliveries, work schedules, targeted output and other required actions are proceeding according to plans.

Evaluation is a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives. Thus evaluation indicators are learning and action-oriented management tools and an organizational process for improving activities still in progress of future planning, programming and decision making..

I. INPUT INDICATORS

1. The Proportion of the Population Aged 0-6 in ECE Institutions

The percentage of children benefitting from ECE services to the population aged 0-6 can be taken as a quantitative coverage indicator of the beneficiaries. Country percentages provide crude indicators of ECE provision, since the age of entry into primary education varies among MENA countries.

In a world survey on ECE carried out by UNESCO, in 1988, involving 70 countries (9 of which were from MENA), 17.4% of the population aged 0-6 were enrolled in ECE institutions. Based on the statistics collected on ECE enrollment in 18 MENA countries, the percentage is around 3.3%. This percentage is calculated on the reported figures of around 2 million children enrolling in ECE institutions out of the estimated 60 million population aged 0-6 in the 18 MENA countries.

Comparing country percentages of ECE enrollment within the MENA region to those of countries of other regions of the world will give a clear indicator of the scale of the quantitative coverage of ECE.

2. ECE Enrollment Rates by Gender

ECE enrollment rates by gender could be compared at the national level as an indicator for coverage in order to check equity aiming to minimize disparities between male and female enrollment as much as possible. Female children in MENA region make up a disproportionate share of unreached ECE beneficiaries.

3. ECE Locational Equity

Locational equity is an indicator to compare urban and rural beneficiaries from ECE services. The unequal distribution of preschool institutions in each of MENA countries causes unequal access. A clear bias is in favour of urban areas.

Locational equity is a geographical distribution indicator which involves comparison between the number of ECE institutions and children in urban and rural areas.

4. Adult/Child Ratio

An adult in ECE programmes might be a teacher, a child-minder or a caretaker. The adult/child ratio is an indicator of quantity service that will have an impact on the quality of intervention programmes. However, the ratio depends on many variables such as type of institution, availability of staff and space. In day-care centres it is expected that a child-minder take care of five children or less if they cannot walk; and 5-8 children who can walk. A nursery caregiver is expected to take care of around 8-12 children between 2-4 years of age. A KG teacher is expected, probably, to arrange learning experiences for a group not exceeding 20 children between 4-6 years of age.

In the MENA region, the adult/child ratio in ECE institutions on the whole is 1:22. In some countries, the ratio expands to 1:34, like in Sudan, and 1:47 in Djibouti.

5. National Policy on ECE

The availability of a national policy on ECE is an indicator of a country's political will to provide early childhood services. Statement of policy is not enough; there should be regulations, directives or guidelines to ensure the implementation of the policy and the setting of targets to quantify and qualify the ECE policy aims.

A national policy on ECE exists in many countries in MENA. Many government ministries (such as MOE and MOSA) and NGOs are involved in supervision, guidance and personnel training for preschool education programmes. However, there is still need for finances necessary for effective and efficient implementation of policies on ECE services in MENA.

6. Public Current Expenditure for ECE

Although most of the region's people share the same language and religion, MENA is characterized by large diversity and disparity. Economically, the region is considered a part of the developing world, but national GNPs range from $400 per capita in Sudan to $19,870 per capita in the UAE (the first figure is 2% of the second). Because of this large disparity, there are significant differences in the resources that MENA countries are able to commit to public current expenditure to education in general and to ECE programmes in particular. Two MENA countries only provided data on their public expenditure for ECE, namely Syria and Tunisia.

This indicator is calculated as expenditure per pupil/child at the national level. However, this indicates only how much was spent, not the quality or effectiveness of the ECE learning experiences. Such an indicator shows whether enough resources are available but not whether they are being used well. For some MENA countries which do not have even the minimal supply of ECE input this indicator will be appropriate to assess their educational efforts.

7. ECE Staff Characteristics

ECE staff characteristics are used as an indicator for monitoring and evaluating ECE services because the teacher is usually the primary source of organizing children's learning experiences. This indicator implies checking for teacher capacity and performance through several variables such as: teacher preparation before being hired, on-the-job teacher training programmes, academic qualifications and experience.

The availability of universities, colleges and institutes offering academic degrees and/or training courses in ECE is an indicator of input exerted to improve staff characteristics in any country. As disparities are wide among countries in the MENA region, it is inappropriate to quantify the proportion of trained personnel

and/or university graduates in ECE. National resources usually have a direct impact on shaping ECE staff characteristics.

8. Availability of Buildings and Equipment

Although there is not a consistent positive correlation between the availability of building facilities and equipment and ECE learning results, both of them are used as an indicator of quality for many external assistance programmes.

In the MENA region, ECE services are provided in rented buildings, in annexes to primary schools, in NGO premises, in special rooms attached to ministries, factories or other work institutions. The indicator implies checking whether the buildings and equipment, including rooms, furniture and playgrounds, create a climate conducive for children to benefit from active learning in ECE institutions.

9. Involvement and Participation of Parents and Community in Developing ECE Programmes

One of the ideas most frequently advocated is to have strong parent/community involvement and participation in ECE programmes. This begins with the identification of needs, to developing a plan of action, to project implementation, to evaluation of outcome. The involvement and participation of parents and community in the design and operation of ECE programmes increases the likelihood of continuity of experience between the home and preschool for the child.

Monitoring and evaluating parent/community involvement and participation, as an indicator, will be measured by reviewing their role in planning, implementing, financing and managing these programmes at the national level.

II. Process Indicators

10. Room Arrangement: Setting Up the ECE Learning Environment

The room arrangement is used as a process indicator in ECE programmes because it affects almost everything children do, their choices, their planning, their use of materials and their relationship with other people. Traditionally, rooms were filled with rows of tables and chairs, children were listening to and watching the teacher.

The ECE learning environment, projected by the room arrangement, reflects the belief that children learn best in a stimulating but ordered environment in which they can make choices and act upon them. The indicator on room arrangement might involve checking the following five steps adopted by High/Scope Foundation:

i. Find space: space is needed for children, a variety of materials and equipment,

ii. Divide the room: into distinct areas or interest centres,

iii. Choose, restore and label materials,

iv. Help children learn about the room, and

v. Display children's work.

11. Monitoring Active Learning Strategies in ECE

This indicator involves monitoring ECE learning experiences leading to children's social and cognitive development. The following seven High/Scope components indicate the use of active learning strategies in ECE as a process. Adults/teachers/caregivers can help children:

* explore activity with all their senses,

* discover relationships through direct experience,

* manipulate, transform and combine materials,

* choose materials, activities and purposes,

* acquire skills with tools and equipment,

* use large muscles and

* take care of their own needs.

12. Availability of Appropriate ECE Learning Experiences

The indicator of appropriate ECE learning experiences could be measured through the availability of the following five components related to the teaching/learning process:

* materials for each child,

* manipulation of those materials by the child,

* choice by the child of what to do with the materials,

* language chosen and used by the child and

* support by adults and peers (both verbal and non-verbal).

While all five of these ingredients may not be present in every active learning experience, they can serve as guidelines, or indicators, for planning, carrying out, monitoring and evaluating the process of learning experiences by young children.

13. Basic Parts and Guidelines for ECE Daily Routine

The daily routine indicator is the schedule of events that occur each day in ECE setting. The basic seven parts of the daily routine indicator, developed by High/Scope are: planning time, work time, clean-up time, recall time, circle time, small-group time and outside time.

The following six guidelines could be applied for establishing the ECE daily routine indicators in MENA region:

* The daily routine is consistent.

* Children are warned ahead of time when there are going to be changes in the daily routine.

* There is a time each day for the plan-do-review cycle.

* There is time for a variety of interactions among children and adults.

* The daily routine provides a balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities.

* The adults responsible for the daily routine use the guidelines above as process indicators to design a daily routine based on the specific needs of their ECE setting.

III. Output Indicators

14. Decreased Dropouts and Repetition Rates in Primary Schools

Dropouts and repetition rates in primary schools are expected to be drastically decreased - and eventually eliminated - by active cooperation on the part of the parents and local community, the provision of ECE services and other relevant and feasible incentives.

This output indicator could be verified by studying the dropout and repetition cases in each country. Pupils who had access to ECE are expected not to be among the dropouts or repetition cases. More ECE coverage is expected to contribute to decreased dropouts and repetition rates.

15. Increased Cognitive Skills During Early Primary School Years

Research evidence continues to accumulate to indicate that the early years are critical in the formation of cognitive skills, personality and social behaviour. Recent research has strengthened the argument of early attention by showing that sensory stimulation from the environment affects the structure and organization of the neural

pathways in the brain during the formative period.[15]

To check for this output indicator, each country in the region might apply locally developed cognitive assessment tools on primary school children to compare those who enjoyed ECE services and those who did not have access to early intervention programmes. A modified version of Stanford-Binet or Wisc-R intelligence tests might be beneficial in developing this output indicator.

16. Increased Productivity and Cost Savings caused by ECE

Without recurring to scientific literature, common sense suggests that a person who is well developed physically, mentally, socially and emotionally will be in a better position to contribute economically to family, community and country than a person who is not. In most MENA countries, that economic contribution begins at a very early age.[16]

Conclusions

ECE intervention programmes might be reinforced and expanded, qualitatively and quantitatively, to cover at risk children in the MENA region by taking the following *overall guidelines* into consideration:

- ***Children's developmental needs are not being met.*** Informal care at home, although preferred and dominant in the region, is not sufficient to meet the demands of social/psychological and cognitive development of children under 6. A range of programming options that can provide ECE at reasonable cost needs to be explored.

- ***Strengthening traditional patterns of ECE (as in the case of Koranic schools) is a viable option.*** The care provided by the extended family members or neighbours can be strengthened by providing caregivers with education, training and access to existing supportive services.

- ***ECE programmes must meet standards of quality control.*** ECE programme standards of quality control must be designed and implemented. Poor quality ECE programmes, with inadequate staff training and facilities, may have a negative impact on target children, and generally will not be utilized by families in spite of their need for ECE services.

- ***ECE programmes must not be limited to the education component,*** but should address the care and development needs of the young child. ECE programmes focussing on young children's learning potential must also respond to the need of child care and development. In addition, existing ECE programmes in MENA must move beyond a custodial view and recognize the need to provide a developmentally appropriate environment for the children under their care.

- ***ECE programmes should become the responsibility of the entire community.*** To be

effective, ECE programmes cannot be confined to the input of MENA governments alone. Closing the gap in the provision of ECE services between urban and rural children should be the responsibility of the whole community. An effective ECE initiative should involve public and private enterprises, local leaders, UN organizations, NGOs and the mass media. Effective ECE programmes should be participatory and community based.

- ***ECE programmes should be financially feasible and cost effective.*** Programmes in MENA must be made possible to implement within recognized resource constraints and should be economically feasible.

- ***ECE programmes should try to reach the largest possible number of children who are at risk.*** Because the need is so great in most countries of MENA, priority should be given to those ECE programmes that offer the best prospect of reaching the children who are "at risk", through the implementation of large scale ECE projects.

- Since children learn from personal interaction with their world, direct experience with real objects, and the application of logical thinking to their experience, the MENA ECE child-minders, caregivers and teachers are advised to provide an environment that promotes *active learning* and to help children think about their actions.

- ***A call for action*** is made to national governments and the international community to proceed with all due haste towards ECE intervention programmes in the MENA region. It is a call to all local communities and NGOs to make the child a central part of their efforts.

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APPENDIX A

A Questionnaire on the Status of ECE in MENA Region

Section 1: Data of ECD (Please insert latest data available)

ITEM	ECD Services			
	Year	Public	Private	Community-Based
1. Number of Institutions a. for children (0-3 years) b. for children (3-6 years)				
2. Number of Trained Personnel				
3. Number of enrolled children a. 0-3 years b. 3-6 years				
4. % of children receiving ECD Programmes (0-6 years)				
5. % of Working Women children between 0-6 years				
6. % of Urban Children receiving ECE services				
7. Length of ECE Operation a. Hours Daily b. Hours Yearly				
8. Mark ECD programmes provided: a. Nutrition/Medical b. Care c. Education i. Child-Centred Approach ii. Formal pre-learning				

Section 2: Programme Survey

1. Does the government have an overall policy for ECE? If yes, please describe (or attach relevant documents): _____
2. Please list, in general terms, the daily activities in a typical pre-school program:
   Morning: _____
   Midday: _____
   Afternoon: _____
   Evening activity, if any: _____
3. % of personnel involved in ECE programmes and academic background:
   University Grads. _____ 2 yr. University _____ Secondary _____
   Less than Secondary _____ Other, (Specify) _____
4. Government expenditure for ECD programmes (in US$):
   1980 _____ 1985 _____ 1990 _____ 1994 _____
5. What is the cost per child per year (in US$)?
   a. How much do parents pay per year? _____ b. How much from government contributions/year? _____
6. What is the socio-economic level of children involved in ECD services?
   $6000+ _____ $3000 - 6000 _____ Below $3000 _____ No Income _____
7. List the main constraints in implementing early childhood development programmes (such as cost, training, coverage, quality etc..). Please specify:

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Appendix B

استبانة حول واقع الطفولة المبكرة
في إقليم الشرق الأوسط وشمال إفريقيا

القسم الأول: بيانات حول تنمية الطفولة المبكرة

يرجى التكرم بإدخال البيانات المتوافرة في الأعمدة التالية:

	السنة	خدمات تنمية الطفولة المبكرة		
		الحكومية	الخاصة	المجتمع المحلي
١. أعداد المؤسسات أ. للأطفال ما بين ٠-٣ سنوات ب. للأطفال ما بين ٣-٦ سنوات				
٢. أعداد العاملين المدرّبين				
٣. أعداد الأطفال الملتحقين أ. ما بين ٠-٣ سنوات ب. ما بين ٣-٦ سنوات				
٤. النسبة المئوية للأطفال الذين يتلقون برامج تنمية الطفولة المبكرة (٠-٦ سنوات)				
٥. النسبة المئوية للنساء العاملات ممن لهن أطفال ما بين (٠-٦ سنوات)				
٦. النسبة المئوية لأطفال المدن الذين يتلقون خدمات تنمية الطفولة المبكرة				
٧. المدة الزمنية للخدمات أ. عدد الساعات يومياً ب. عدد الساعات سنوياً				
٨. يرجى أن تضع (/) أمام الخدمات المقدمة في تنمية الطفولة المبكرة فيما يلي أ. التغذية / الصحة ب. الرعاية ج. التربية (١) طريقة التركيز على الطفل (٢) الطريقة النظامية لما قبل التعلم				

القسم الثاني: مسح للبرنامج

١. هل تتوافر لدى الحكومة سياسة عامة لتنمية الطفولة المبكرة؟ إذا كان الأمر بالإيجاب، يرجى تحديد هذه السياسة باختصار (أو يرجى أن ترفق الوثائق ذات الصلة):

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٢. يرجى أن تضع بعبارات عامة قائمة بالأنشطة اليومية في يوم نمطي (عادي) لبرامج الأطفال ما قبل المدرسة:

أنشطة الصباح: ----------

أنشطة الظهيرة: ----------

أنشطة ما بعد الظهر: ----------

أنشطة المساء (إن وجدت): ----------

٣. النسبة المئوية للعاملين المعنيين ببرامج تنمية الطفولة المبكرة من حيث الخلفية الأكاديمية والمهنية:

خريجو الجامعات ------ ٪ أقل من المرحلة الثانوية ------ ٪

سنتان جامعيتان ------ ٪ فئات أخرى (يُرجى التحديد) ------ ٪

الثانوية العامة ------ ٪

٤. المصروفات الحكومية لبرامج تنمية الطفولة المبكرة (بالدولارات الأمريكية)

١٩٨٠ ----------

١٩٨٥ ----------

١٩٩٠ ----------

١٩٩٤ ----------

٥. ما التكلفة المقدرة لكل طفل في العام (بالدولارات الأمريكية)؟

أ. ما الذي يدفعه الآباء سنوياً؟ ----------

ب. ما هو الإسهام الحكومي سنوياً؟ ----------

٦. ما المستوى الاقتصادي الاجتماعي للأطفال المعنيين بخدمات تنمية الطفولة المبكرة؟ يرجى تحديد الفئات:

الدخل المرتفع (أكثر من ٦ آلاف دولار سنوياً) ----------

الدخل المتوسط (ما بين ٣ آلاف و ٦ آلاف دولار سنوياً) ----------

الدخل المنخفض (أقل من ٣ آلاف دولار سنوياً) ----------

(بدون دخل) ----------

٧. ضع قائمة بالمعوقات الرئيسية التي تعترض تنفيذ برامج تنمية الطفولة المبكرة (كالتكاليف، والتدريب، والتغطية، والنوعية، إلى آخره، يرجى التحديد):